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MR. BENTLEY:

OR, THE

RURAL PHILOSOPHER.

A T A L E

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L . II.

D U B L I N :

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MR. BEN T. E. Y.

OF THE

GENERAL PHILLOSOPHER

A T A L E

W T T T T T T T

V O L U M E

P U B L I S H E D

By W. B. E. Y. & Co. New York

Mr. BENTLEY.

C H A P. I.

MR. *Selwin*, to whose care the young gentlemen were committed, was a merchant of extensive connections, and a man of fair reputation: he had known Mr. *Bentley* in the former part of his life, and had a particular regard for him and Mr. *Fairfield*. He considered the care of their children a strong mark of confidence and friendship; and determined to acquit himself of the charge, with all the attention he was able.

In the letters he received from the country, great weight was laid upon the correctness of the young people's dispositions, and he was taught likewise, that they conceived a very little restraint would be sufficient, as the strictness of their education had already instructed them to beware of the snares of the world. Their behaviour

viour confirmed every favourable character given in the letters, and satisfied Mr *Selwin* it did not proceed merely from the prejudice of the parents.

As their stay was to be confined to a few months, they were to be indulged in every innocent gratification of their curiosity; and it was trusted, their own good sense and discretion might be depended on, for their choice of proper engagements for that time.

Fairfield employed the first opportunity after his arrival, in writing to his dear *Betsy*; and as correspondencies of this cast run pretty much in the same stile, we shall only lay before our readers his first epistle, and the young lady's answer.

"Little does my dear and tenderly respected Miss *Bentley* conceive, how constantly she lives in my thoughts, and how impossible it is for any distance to divide her faithful *Edward* from the memory of her many graces.

"I have many acknowledgments to make, my charming *Betsy*, for this privilege of committing my heart to paper, and of testifying, again and again, the ardour and sincerity of my passion, in characters that may confront me with the basest apostacy, if ever I should cease to love you, even for a moment. My whole delight in this croud of flattery and artful creatures, is, to dwell constantly on the raptures of past scenes, and to anticipate the happy hour, when we shall meet again, never to be separated more.

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“ The people in this city talk to me of its curiosities, its customs, its fashions, its politeness, its gaiety, and much more ; and cannot account for my insensibility to every thing about me, because they know not that I am in love, and that the object of my affection is Miss *Bentley*. They amuse me, as they think, by hurrying me from one busy scene to another ; but I have no pleasure, but such as immediately proceeds from contemplating the perfections of Miss *Bentley*. What a cruel kindness is that they practise towards me ! And how false are the notions of this polished people ! When I retire to my closet to enjoy the most pleasing reveries, to follow you in one little domestic duty to another ; to conceive you are now walking in the flower-garden, now are seated in the grove, now are ranging through the woods, and blessing other eyes with your presence ; when these sweet imaginations possess me, with every best felicity I am capable of enjoying, they call me to company, to ceremony, and to noise ; and would persuade me, that reflection is melancholy, and that solitude is dulness. Mistaken, false-taught men ! I fear, that, to love them as I ought, it is necessary I view them at a distance.

“ You can have no idea, my *Betty*, of the strange love of dissipation that reigns here in every bosom. The ladies are generally handsome, but I think your papa gave a faithful picture of their follies. They dress strangely, they talk strangely, they act strangely. There is a confident effrontery in polite life, and a barbarous formality among people

people in the middle station, that would equally excite your pity and admiration. They endeavour to persuade the world, that their sex is incapable of friendship, and all their intimacies are methodical and distant, cold and formal. Cruel and insensible, sweet creatures! they deprive society of its most valuable blessing, by dedicating their time to their dress, and barbarously neglecting themselves.

“ Can you believe, that they encourage every insipidity of address from the men? That they are satisfied with professions without truth, delicacy without sense, and politeness without a meaning? Can you conceive, that their conversation is altogether confined to trifles; that their education is without wisdom, their examples without prudence, and their conduct without consistency?

“ There may be many advantages attending what is called an accomplished education, but I shall be ever happy to think, that those most dear to me were cultivated at a distance from the croud. I congratulate myself a thousand times a day, that our souls are suited for obscurity; that we shall be permitted to hide our heads together in the shade, and taste sweet peace; and calmly pass forward to eternity. You are sensible, my dear *Betsy*, that I love you for the artless beauties of your person, that I love you for the beauties of heart, and the graces of your intelligent mind; but above all, I love you for a superiority to city sense, and an ignorance of city manners. If I can prevail upon your brother, I believe, before
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the month expires, I shall be happy in your company; but if I must endure a more tedious absence, pray give me as much of your company as possible, by writing to me as often as you are able. I can by no means reconcile myself to this strange people, and heartily repent our expedition; but as my friend seems particularly delighted with every thing about him, I fear a few weeks must elapse, before I can assure you in person, how much I am your faithful and affectionate

E. FAIRFIELD."

C H A P. II.

MISS Bentley's answer was as follows:

"My papa, Master *Fairfield*, who has taught me always to contend for more than the semblance of delicacy, justifies me, in answering your very affectionate letter. And indeed, sir, I should be a very disingenuous, a very hypocritical

tical girl, to deny that every kind notice you take of me by letter, gives me more pleasure than can be expressed in many words. My hand trembled, and my heart was uncommonly agitated on the receipt of this before me; for I had a thousand apprehensions for your safety in so long a journey; and my simple forebodings of something, like a possible forgetfulness of past constancy, kept me waking and weeping three whole nights, and I did not know what tidings of good or evil might be brought me. My papa has taken uncommon pains to console me; but, sweet man! he is always good, always kind, and ever tender; he dissipates all my fears, and tells me I deserve to be happy. But, sir, you know my papa is a wise man, and thinks fearfully of the great city; he rejoices with me that your stay in *London* is to be so short, for it more than half repents him, that he ever consented to your journey. However, he has great faith in yours and my brother's discretion and waits your return with pleasure.

“ You will laugh at me for being a strange fanciful girl; but indeed I think the flower-garden greatly disordered since you left it, nor do my favourite Robins sing so sweetly, in my idea, as they were used to do; the hermitage is grown very dull, and the grotto very gloomy; I have got a sad method of sighing, and love best to be alone.

“ To be sure it is very idle to indulge foolish superstitions; but I cannot help entertaining weak apprehensions at times, and in spite of all my
papa s

papa's good humoured politeness, and affectionate assiduity, I cannot help being a little unhappy. I am more pleased with the tender love elegies of Mr. *Hammond*, and the plaintive numbers of Mr. *Shenstone*, than ever I was in my life, and I fear I am very faulty in rather neglecting my little pupils, for the benefit of retirement and reflection.

"I think you say very well, that the people of *London* are strange, if they call solitude irksome; for indeed I take hardly any pleasure in society, equal to what I experience, when I walk through the poplar trees by moonlight, and think of my rural philosopher alone.

"But pray, sir, did you expect I should approve of your severity on my sex? Do you know so little of your *Betsy*, as to conceive her fond of satire? Indeed, indeed, sir, I will not think you justified in forming a precipitate judgment of the ladies in *London*; and beside I will suggest to you, that my papa, in all his comments, inclines strictly to good nature and candour; so, my dear *Edward*, you must not expect my approbation of so severe a censure on my sex, especially as you confess the men are so highly blameable in their conduct towards them. I thank you, and again I thank you, for expressing yourself so very tenderly and faithfully in my favour, and let me assure you, in return, it shall be the supreme pleasure of my life to convince you, how immediately your happiness is connected with that of your affectionate

ELIZABETH BENTLEY."

In

In this manner the two lovers constantly corresponded.

The young gentlemen had not been in *London* a month, before *Fairfield's* opinion of the city had altered considerably in its favour. He began to grow rather more reconciled to absence from his *Betsy*, and to the scenes about him; and with respect to *Bentley*, he was so charmed with the ways of town, and so reluctant to leave it so soon, as was expected by his father, that he spared no rhetoric with his friend, to prevail on him to petition for a discretionary indulgence; and as he had an unlimited influence over *Fairfield*, he very easily complied, and they both subscribed to the request, in a letter to the old gentleman, and obtained their suit, not without some hesitation on the part of *Mr. Bentley*. That thinking man trembled for possible consequences, yet great was his confidence in his son, and the plan of education he had pursued with him. He was sensible, however, the request came directly from that quarter, and though he could not think of a peremptory denial, he wished for a plea to recall him. At last, after some debate with himself, he resolved to write to *Mr. Selwin*, to watch them with more circumspection than before; and determined not to suffer them to stay in town at all events many months longer. In this letter to that gentleman he said, "I am very far from being easy, respecting the inquisitive disposition of my son. His morals are good, and his sense is strong; but the world is crafty, and there is little security
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in much wisdom. The credulous generosity of youth is against him. The confidence of security may betray him a thousand ways, and if you love me, watch over him, give me the earliest intelligence of inclination to error, and I will bless you for it most heartily."

C H A P. III.

WITH regard to Miss *Betsy*, the effect this disappointment had on her susceptible heart, may be more easily imagined than described. She was always inclined to indulge an apprehensive doubt, about possible consequences that might result from the journey; and this last appeal to her father confirmed all her fears in an instant. She had made some little preparation for their reception, and counted the days and the hours, and conceived they had taken leave of *London*, and were then upon the road, when the fatal petition reached her father. She flew with eagerness to the hermitage, to gather the contents from
 Mr. *Bentley*;

Mr. *Bentley*; and as he read on, fixed her eyes stedfastly upon her father, and listened in full expectation of hearing the certain day of their arrival, and that she should prepare to receive them in a few hours. Her disappointment was inexpressibly great, and she burst into a violent agony of tears. 'O fir! O fir! she said, this is much, much more than I could possibly be prepared for, and my heart is melting at my eyes. Sure, fir, it cannot be, that Master *Fairfield* has joined my brother in this request? Is it so, fir? Then flinging her arms about her father's neck, and hiding her face in his bosom, O my papa, save me, save me from my fears—save me, save me from my fears, for I begin to think his last letters have abated of their warmth, and that another month may make your *Betsy* wretched enough of all conscience. She wept much, and affected the old gentleman not a little; he consoled her however as much as possible, assured her he had no doubt, but the motion was first made by her brother; that *Fairfield* had complied through friendship, and did not doubt but his next letter would silence all her fears, respecting his infidelity; and that a few weeks would restore their family to its former union and felicity. He suppressed his own objections, for fear of increasing her alarm, and the young lady waited impatiently for his next letter.

C H A P. IV.

THE young gentlemen, *Bentley* in particular, received the consent from his father with especial pleasure; he promised himself a glorious swing of indulgence, in the amusements of the town, for a month or two at least, and at the expiration of that term, did not fear of finding a fresh excuse to delay their return. *Fairfield* was very far from the infatuation of Mr. *Bentley*, but still his prejudices against *London* were very much softened; and as they were both genteelly supplied with pocket-money, they had every opportunity of enjoying every thing the great city could furnish. They began to make material alterations in their dress, soon after their arrival; and complied in great degree with the fashion, without following it in the extreme. *Bentley*, in particular, objected to the plainness and awkward simplicity of their former habits, and talked now and then of taste and gentility, and consulted his taylor on all occasions.

We are sorry to confess, young *Bentley* soon began to furnish a melancholy proof of the insufficiency of the strictest education, to counteract the many seducements of the world. He soon formed

formed a variety of acquaintances with gay young people of both sexes; and though it was some time before he could be persuaded to pursue vice, yet he very soon began to consider it with less abhorrence than he was taught to do. He conversed daily with young fellows of the most specious understandings, who valued themselves on what is called a liberal education, would talk freely of the prejudices of age, and the superstitious credulity of the crowd. They would object to the miracles of scripture, as absurd, and called the Levitical institution a very political design, but not any way to be received by men, capable of investigating truth, and confuting the errors of the vulgar. They would laugh at the absurd supposition of a future existence, and logically denied the possibility of an immortality of spirit divested of all matter. They would insist, that the free agency of man was unlimited; that no body would account for their own thoughts; that reason had a right to make what enquiries she thought proper; and that no man could be culpable in the sight of heaven, for objecting to what he could not understand.

This, though at first it did not absolutely overturn Mr. *Bentley's* precepts, considerably weakened them; and the young man began to conceive his education had been purposely confined, to prevent a possibility of reasoning for himself in matters of material moment. My father, he would say, had my few advantages of education; and his views must be necessarily confined. It is true, a constitutional goodness of heart, leads him

him to sound morality, and an excellent propriety of conduct; but his faith is implicit, and without enquiry; and the propriety of it cannot be proved by reason. He was taught to stagger at the divine nature's being incarnate for the salvation of sinners; he could not reconcile the idea of a trinity in unity, or how an eternal existence could be extinguished on *Mount Calvary* for three days. He objected to the possibility of the sun's being darkened on that awful occasion, without a natural eclipse; nor could he conceive it possible, that all the divine attributes were equally inflexible; and that divine justice could no way be satisfied, but by an interposition of such severe mercy, as the sacrifice of the eternal son. His companions taught him the words, *priestcraft*, *ignorance*, and *superstition*; and he soon began to think as liberally as themselves. He read Dr. *Young's* sublime reasoning with *Lorenzo*, without yielding to his argument; and scepticism began to reign in his heart, and his father began to be forgotten. As *Fairfield* was at first particularly fond of retirement, *Bentley* had every opportunity of pursuing his casuistry alone, he sought the polite circles at every opportunity, was introduced to the tea-tables of fashionable people, and qualified himself in a few weeks for what is called good company.

C H A P. V.

HE was not however quite reconciled to his new opinions, he felt less peace than he was wont to do, and often attempted to stifle reflection, but in vain. The memory of past contentment haunted him like his shadow. A sense of the omnipresence of the Deity dwelt, at times, forcibly on his thoughts, and determined him to act like a wise man, before so awful a witness; but these resolutions were generally made at midnight, when darkness oppresses the mind with more awe, than it experiences in the blaze of day, and the examples and councils of his friends made these reflections visit him very rarely.

As the arguments for religion were weakened, the restriction of moral conduct began to fall. From Deism to absolute infidelity is a short step, and he soon found it convenient to adopt the latter creed. He would talk confidently of dropping into the dark, in extreme old age, when the organs were all decayed, and the body laboured under every disqualification: and argue that the wisdom of providence, which makes nothing in vain, had never implanted passions in the human breast,

breast, if they were not to be indulged; by which means he acquired a strange talent for self-deception, and grew negligent about the employments of time, and the consequences of eternity.

He was sitting one evening in a box at the coffee-house, talking to one of his most intimate acquaintances, in the character of a man altogether studious to convince himself of the propriety of error: and as he took pains to be overheard, in hopes of being called upon to maintain a dispute with some weak adversary: a young gentleman, of a very modest appearance and engaging address, begged leave, very politely and submissively, to be permitted to answer some objections which he had started very rashly. *Bentley* was not so far gone, as to be quite superior to conviction, as he rather wished to be fully satisfied of his doubts, than confirmed in his fears, listened to the stranger's discourse with strict attention; he was, however, predetermined to allow little weight to any thing that should make against his own prepossessions; and therefore, though he suffered the other to proceed without interruption, yet when he had finished, he returned to his charge; allowed of very few of his adversary's positions, and objected to the deductions he drew from them. He was, however, uncommonly pleased with the modest sedateness of the speaker, felt an uncommon prejudice in his favour, and requested to be ranked among the foremost of his friends. The young gentleman, on the other hand, pitied the false positiveness of *Bentley*, perceived he had betrayed much good sense, by suf-

fering himself to be led beyond his depth, and resolved, at all events, to serve him with better advice, if it lay in his power. He therefore readily consented to cultivate a future good understanding, and at parting expressed himself to this purpose:

“ I am a young man, sir, as well as yourself, and the little advantage of years in my scale, gives me no authority to dictate: but believe me, sir, if you value wisdom, if you value yourself, you will consult a never-failing monitor within you, and own, that your present principles are wrong: you will else very soon find this world to be indeed a *blank*, and the future much worse than a *fable*. I will furnish you with my address, when I am settled in town, but till then, you will always hear of me at this coffee-house.”

This gentleman appeared something more than twenty, but carried the gravity of fifty. He spoke like a man who knew the value of speech, and employed his talent, like one who thought constantly, independently of the thoughts of others. He had a title to much fame, for the correctness and elegant forcibility of his argument, but he despised so mean a consideration. He spoke as he acted in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, and cared little for the erroneous opinions of his creatures. He appeared to have undergone some severe trouble, looked pale and sickly, and was rather spiritless and thoughtful; but exerted himself, where he conceived it to be proper, with great energy and skill.

Bentley

Bentley had never met with so capable an opponent before; he went home, and retired to his closet, and called a council of his heart, and began to be staggered not a little. It is possible, said he, when I consider I cannot account for any thing my senses witness to; it is possible that things may exist, to which my senses cannot witness. Perhaps, it is possible this body may have an immortal soul within it, capable of existing in a separate state to all eternity; else it is odd the heathen world should think so, guided by the mere light of nature. Perhaps too, as I have somewhere read respecting the argument for *chance*, there may be an hell by chance; and if so, should I be taken sick this night, and should the physician give me over to-morrow, how would my casuistry sustain me? As it is, I confess, I do not like solitude, and when enveloped in midnight darkness, often think of supernatural appearances. Perhaps, as *Mr. Pope* says, 'Man was not made to question;' for surely, if he was, it is strange he never should be satisfied. I must think more seriously of these things, for at present I am hopeless of all light beyond the grave, and dissatisfied with every thing on this side that gloomy scene. He was violently agitated in this state of doubt and perplexity, when some of his companions calling upon him at that instant, summoned him to fulfil an engagement at the play-house. They remarked the gloom upon his countenance, and very soon laughed him into the same latitude of principles, they had involved him in before.

The air of gaiety universally displayed at the theatre, contributed to relieve him from the anguish of his reflections; he very soon forgot every temporal inclination to the right, and gave into all their follies with cheerfulness and alacrity. Mr. *Garrick* that night performed the character of *Ranger*, and recommended the joys of a rakish life so strongly, that *Bentley* determined on some act of gallantry in his way home.

As he was passing the new church in the *Strand*, he observed a crowd gathered round an hackney coach that had broke down, and observed a lady in great distress, endeavouring to get out of the vehicle. He pressed thro' the mob, and opening the door in the instant, politely helped her out of the carriage, and offered his service to attend her home. As she lived at some little distance, and was rather alarmed by the accident, his offer was courteously accepted, and *Bentley* determined to lose no time in prepossessing the lady in his favour. His person was very agreeable, his dress genteel, and his address ingenious and pleasing. He had a musical voice, and a soft persuasion of speech, that not a little recommended him to the ladies. He was master of every common-place compliment, and valued himself on a capacity to influence the passions, whenever he thought proper. His companions in a few months had taught him much, but his own genius suggested much more. He had entirely forgot the humble timidity of the rustic, and conceived, he vindicated his knowledge of the world, by infringing every little line of propriety it presented to him.

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However, he thought it convenient to maintain an artful affected reserve, till he became more acquainted with the lady, and then determined to pursue an unlimited conduct, and think nothing of ridiculous restrictions in future.

C H A P. VI.

THE figure of the lady he had rescued from danger was, in every sense of the word, a very fine one. She was delicate without too much effeminacy, and seemed mistress of every accomplishment, that nature and the schools could give her. She repeatedly acknowledged the very great obligation he had conferred upon her, and, at his earnest request, gave him permission to enquire after her health next day.

After he had parted from her, he began to be possessed with a new train of ideas. I have seen,

said he, many fine women with indifference, and was never sensible of an emotion of this sort, till this moment. She is certainly a sweet creature, and if it is possible to possess her, invention shall not be spared, nor any assiduity neglected. I will return to-morrow, and I will engage her affections by every artifice in my power; I will then affect a sudden indifference, and triumph over the tender credulity of her disposition. But if every specious insinuation fails me, a polite man may find a thousand ways to be happy.

He reached home full of these imaginations, and thought so little of his late temper of mind, that he determined to gratify his passions in future, at all events, and to trust indifferently to any consequences that might follow.

He had been engaged in many gallantries before, and was grown conversant with every art of seduction, that is practised by men of the world. He determined to grow careless about shame and remorse; to stifle every call of conscience, and listen to reflection no more. He concealed from his friend *Fairfield*, this adventure, and resolved to conduct his amours with strict secrecy, that Mr. *Selwin* might not alarm his father. His ideas dwelt so strongly on the fair unknown, that sleep fled his temples that night, and the plan of her future seduction entirely possessed his thoughts; he resolved in his mind a thousand schemes that promised success, and resolved to go every length to accomplish his designs upon her virtue.

During

During this extraordinary revolution in his temper and disposition, he maintained so plausible a correspondence with his father, that the old gentleman had no suspicion of his errors, and was sorry that he had ever entertained a doubt of his son's consistency on every occasion; so that one of the first consequences of his apostacy, was a departure from that fair truth, and honest frankness of behaviour, that once distinguished him so justly: a sense of criminality obliged him to use every unworthy artifice to conceal it, and he yielded to the depths of degeneracy with unconcern, and seemed to welcome temporal and eternal ruin.

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C H A P. VII.

WHEN the principles of religion lose their influence over the heart, the maxims of morality become discretionary, and the ties of honour a mere chimerical engagement. The man acts from a dangerous false notion of uncontrollable free agency, and considers himself, at times, superior to every restriction. This was the exact case with *Bentley*. A correct line of conduct had been marked out for him, in the early part of his life, and he then walked invariably by the rules proposed; educated at a distance from confused societies, he dreamed little of the vices of the world, himself being unqualified to combat their temptations. His father, indeed, had taken strict pains to impress upon his mind the dangers he was liable to meet with, but the arguments of theory wanted weight, when opposed to practical errors. We have observed he was naturally inquisitive, and conceived his father had not suffered his mind to expand, in proportion to its ability, and therefore it is less to be wondered at, that his thirst for knowledge, and conceptions of mental freedom, led him, by quick degrees, so fatally into an opposite extreme of conduct. He judged rightly enough, that the forms of devotion

tion could be nothing, and that the openly prophane are not more offensive in the sight of heaven, than the formal hypocrisy, the external sanctity of men, who affected a methodical decency of carriage. He observed people talking of the Deity on the sabbath day, who never concerned themselves about religion all the week, and would insist, perhaps with great reason, that the generality of people went to church by mere method, and were to the full as mechanical in their devotions, as in any operation of their trades. These considerations induced him, as he felt nothing of the spirit of religion, to affect nothing of the practice,

Let the reader, if he is a parent, pause here a while, and consider what this young man now is, and what he has been. Let him learn his child wisdom from the apostacy of *Bentley*. Learn him to talk nothing of his own strength, when opposed to the united enmity of the world. Learn him to walk humbly in the path of duty, and rest satisfied with the conduct of providence towards him, in every situation of life, without seeking to investigate its ways.

And let the young man of fine talents look full upon this faded picture, and weep over the blighting of so fair a blossom. Let him be jealous in the choice of his friends, his books, his pursuits, if he would wish to live reconciled to himself and to the world. And let him learn there is no music like the sweet whispers of an applauding conscience. Stern winter may desolate the beauties of autumn,

autumn, but spring will restore the graces of the garden; the rose will again blush, and the nightingale renew her song; the fragrance of the blossom be restored, and harmony return as before. But the depredations of vice upon the heart, are too often eternally fatal; and the cold wintry grave hides the head of the wicked; eternal spring is forfeited for ever.

C H A P. VIII.

FAIRFIELD, as we observed before, seldom engaged in the dissipation of his friend: he remarked the material alteration in his conduct, and thought he talked much too freely of things which ought to be held sacred. He objected much to the company he kept, and often expostulated with him on the strange turn of his behaviour. He however valued him with the strictest sincerity, and was too much awed by an inferiority of his own understanding. He was more timid in making engagements with strangers, and less inquisitive in every respect, than young *Bentley*.

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His turn was no way speculative, and his inclination to error nothing like equal to that of his friend's. We are, however, sorry to remark he was materially injured in his principles, and liked the metropolis each day better than the former. As some months had elapsed since he left the country, he began to think less of Miss *Bentley*. His letters were less frequent, and less tender, and he felt very little inclination to return. We are, indeed, sorry to confess, that *Fairfield* afforded a strong proof of the weakness of the human heart; and that the most solemn engagements are too often insufficient to confine the fluctuating affections. It is hardly possible to conceive, after the ardour of passion he had so long felt for Miss *Bentley*, after the tender solemnity of their parting, after the repeated promises of fidelity, and the reluctance with which he left her only for a few weeks; it is indeed hard to conceive it is possible, that his passions could so soon cool, that his affections could so cruelly alter in favour of an object every way inferior to the sweet rustic he was forsaking. But the lot of mortality is indeed humble, and there is no contradiction, that the inconsistency of the human heart cannot account for.

Bentley had introduced him to many polite circles, and by that means brought him acquainted with a lady of no uncommon merit, whom we shall distinguish by the name of *Melbourn*. This lady was neither charming in her person, correct in the understanding, or distinguishable for the goodness of her heart. Her stature was remarkably

bly tall, and her shape remarkably irregular. Her features were altogether incorrect, and her complexion very dark, and very indelicate. There was indeed a talkative vivacity in her eyes, but they were rather confident, than expressive, and rather bold, than pleasing. Her face was long, and the lower part of it uncommonly pointed. Her conversation was as specious as her education had been irregular. She mistook ill-nature for wit, and by constantly torturing every sentence that passed in common conversation, acquired a reputation for *bon mots*, and *double entendre*. She supplied herself every morning with a few extracts from the best poets, to give her a character for reading, all which she constantly forgot by bed-time, and renewed her studies next day. She possessed an unbounded delight in exercising every severity of satire upon her sex, nor did the misfortunes of youth or the infirmities of age escape the criticisms of her tongue. The flattery of an idiot would give her rapture, but was always tormented when told of the perfections of her friends. She would hear with the greatest tranquility of the firing of an house, or the ruin of a family; but the minutest deviation from the etiquette of politeness, would shock her beyond measure. Such a lady called to see her, and left no card, it was barbarous! it was gothic! Miss such a one went to church in a *warm* cloak, merely because the weather was *cold*—and that was horrid ungentle, and shockingly unfashionable! And then again, another Lady was seen at noon day with pinked heels to her shoes instead of cherry coloured, and the creature was vulgar beyond
concep-

conception! When she pretended to vindicate her candour, it was certain, that Miss *A.* was a very accomplished girl, had a fine face and lovely features; but then her temper was abominable; her scolding the maids, her tyranny over the footman, was not to be justified by any means; and indeed, she had no knowledge of breeding, either at home or abroad. Then Miss *B.* was a very sober, sensible, sedate, good girl, but prodigiously plain, and very awkward. And as for Miss *C.* she worked delightfully at her needle, played a pool at quadrille with great judgment, understood pickling and preserving, and domestic concerns, but was amazingly ignorant, had not one word to say for herself in company, and was sure to be the laughing-stock of every gentleman present. Thus she always qualified her praise with censure, and those were sure to be most strongly recommended who least deserved it. She possessed above all a misery in monied matters, that was highly unnatural for her years. Though her father was immensely rich, and daily adding to his fortune, her avarice knew no bounds, and her unfeeling heart hardened at the calamities of others. Her behaviour to strangers was forward; she gave a distant artful encouragement to every man who casually spoke to her, and then boasted of the number of her admirers to modest girls who never had any. She was passionately fond of amusement, and therefore generally admitted the addresses of some credulous suitor at *Michaelmas*, and as constantly discharged him in spring. By which means she was *franked* to all the winter amusements, and passed her summers with her father

father at a villa, a few miles distant from town, in planning some future conquest. She would admit letters, with a view to return them, when the lover grew importunate; and appoint interviews, to mortify the party with a peremptory denial. She was constitutionally incapable of every tender emotion herself, yet took uncommon pains to torment others, with a sensibility in her favour. Such are some of the outlines of a character, that an unthinking youth, trained as *Fairfield* was, could think of preferring to the amiable, the modest, the tender, the susceptible, the faithful, the affectionate Miss *Bentley*. Such was the lady for whom a man, taught religiously to reverence his word, could even violate an oath, made in favour of heaven's most perfect works, to obtain the notice of her smiles.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

CAN the reader think with patience of such infidelity as this, where the inducements were so contemptible, the recommendations of the party so despicable, superficial and feeble? It is true, he had not resolved to renounce his *Betsy*, but he found his heart greatly biassed in favour of his new flame, and he began to conceive a little more absence might totally wipe away the memory of past endearments with Miss *Bentley*. He therefore assiduously pursued the lady in town, escorted her to all the public concerts, plays, masques, balls, &c. complimented her with *billet-doux*, and courted her with sonnets, and began to figure in the stile of flattery, foppery, insipidity, and folly. He neglected to answer two of the most tender letters from his *Betsy*, and began to prepare some fresh apology for a longer continuance in town.

Mr. *Selwin* at this time began to feel himself delicately situated with regard to his charge of the young men. He lamented the abuse of talents that *Bentley* daily committed, and was sensible that *Fairfield* was affected in a great degree with the errors of the times. He remarked their modish concurrence with the whims of fashion, and that they pursued pleasure with an avidity inconsistent

inconsistent with moral safety. He satisfied himself, however, as well as he was able, that their stay would expire in a very little time; and thought it might be sufficient to give their fathers an hint of some alteration when they went back, without alarming him with a circumstantial narrative of their misfortunes before their departure. He was sorry to find his old friend so deceived in his children, and determined to caution him against sending them to *London* any more. The young men began to grow less distant and reserved in their behaviour, kept late hours, and often came home disguised in liquor; brought their riotous bottle-companions to disconcert the œconomy and decency of Mr. *Selwin's* family, and were guilty of every irregularity. Mr. *Selwin* would often generously and politely expostulate with them on the occasion; but his admonitions were only thought of for the moment.

Bentley in particular was highly extravagant, not only in his dress, but in his pocket expences. He associated with dissipated young men of fortune, and imitated their luxury and debauchery in every particular. He daily received lessons at dancing, fencing, &c. and commenced the fine gentleman and man of fashion.

To return to his amour with the lady he rescued from the coach. He waited on her next day, dressed to considerable advantage. He was received with the strictest politeness, and availed himself of every advantage a gay plausibility of address could give him. His vivacity
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was particularly pleasing, and his affectation of moral rectitude, deceitful to the last degree. He was guarded and correct in his conversation, yet persuasive and insinuating; and made no small impression on the young lady's heart, whose affections had never been absolutely engaged before. He made every use of his confidence, declared himself her most ardent admirer, gave a satisfactory account of his family and connections, and obtained permission to renew his visits on every future opportunity.

The lady conceived no inconsiderable prejudice in his favour; was pleased with his affected modesty, his frankness, his politeness, and thought him master of every accomplishment, that could recommend him to sense and candour. The soft dictates of her passion, suggested many favourable impressions, and she exulted in having made so complete a conquest over so excellent a young man.

At parting, he recollected an appointment at the gaming table, and as the hour began to be shortened, he hastened to the rendezvous in high spirits.

C H A P.

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WE should have mentioned before, that among the improprieties of his conduct, the passion for gaming bore a considerable share; and that he had often met with large losses, and contracted large debts on that account. He had been seated some time, and engaged pretty deeply in the game, when the young gentleman who expostulated in so friendly a manner with him at the coffee-house, accidentally came into the room. He immediately observed young *Bentley* in all the anxiety of a losing gamester, and lamented the sudden gradation of his error. He respected his sense, but pitied his impetuosity; and resolved to serve him on this occasion, and every other he was capable of. He remarked some unfair shuffling dealings in the party he played with, and was apprehensive, as his passions began to be inflamed by his losses, that he might suffer materially at that sitting, if some project was not directly found to prevent it.

He accordingly retired to a neighbouring coffee-house unperceived by *Bentley*, and sent the waiter to him with a letter, desiring his immediate attendance, as a gentleman had business of moment to communicate to him.

Bentley

Bentley was considerably ruffled with wine and ill-luck, when the servant delivered the letter; however, as his instant attendance was urged so strongly, he was forced much against his inclination to beg a temporary excuse of his antagonist, and promised to return in a few minutes.

When he came to the coffee-house, and heard the preface to the young stranger's apology, and found that he was called off merely to receive a dull lecture upon gaming, his passion grew ungovernable; he ill-treated the gentleman with most opprobrious terms; told him his officious attention to his conduct was very superfluous and impertinent; and if his respect to decency did not restrain him, he would cane him without reserve. "Confine your muddy maxims in future, sir, said he, to men capable of receiving instruction from so mean a quarter, for depend upon it, the next insult of this sort you presume to offer to my sense and my spirit, I'll take such severe notice of your tuition, as you shall not forget in a hurry." The young gentleman, no way agitated by his phrenzy, replied with moderation and strict friendship; assured him, he had no motive but liberality and honesty in rescuing him from the frauds of a sharper; and that, in whatever light he thought proper to consider his conduct, he felt himself justified in what he had done; made every allowance for a passion which resulted from conviction of folly; and told him, he was satisfied he would candidly confess an obligation, when the cooler moments of reason prevailed. This considerably increased the anger of *Bentley*,
he

he called him a cynical, hypocritical expostulator ; an artful triumpher over those passions he first excited in others ; declared nothing should ever influence him to pardon so notorious a breach of good manners ; and raised his passion to that excess, that he insisted on immediate satisfaction. Then drawing his sword, " Draw, sir, said he, this instant, or I will call you a poltroon and a scoundrel to your teeth, and brand you in every company for an insolent invader of the laws of politeness, and an infamous evader of the demands of honour. Draw, sir, draw ; my soul shall be satisfied for this insult, though my heart's blood be drained."

He placed himself in a posture of defence, and the young gentleman measuring him with his eye with ineffable pity and contempt, surveyed his attitude in silence for some moments ; then recovering himself a little from his surprize at the madness of *Bentley's* behaviour, he drew a chair, and carelessly sat down. He continued silent some time to the bitterest invectives the other could heap upon him, and then calmly, without any emotion, addressed *Bentley* as follows.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

“HAD I not conceived, sir, when first I came acquainted with you, that you had some morals, some understanding, I had never entertained a momentary prejudice in your favour, and should have spared you this shameful forgetfulness of every thing becoming a man and a gentleman. I should have left you to the mercy of a miscreant that was preying upon your fortune, and have escaped the illiberal abuse which the meanest of the multitude might blush at. Was I, sir, as susceptible of violent passion as yourself, and had I as little capacity to correct the irregularity of my temper as you have, before this, sir, you would have seen me in a different situation, and might have been fatally sensible, by this time, that your wisdom forsook you when you insulted the spirit of a man. Trained to the profession of the sword, and skilful in the use of that weapon, I might have taught you a severe lesson, rash young man, and vindicated that false honour, about which you talk, as the world instructs you. I might have convinced you, how much my spirit resents an aggravated affront, and retorted your abuse with the blood of your bosom. I might have humbled you to the dust, without
any

any preparation, and your soul might have been sacrificed for ever. But I will teach you, in spite of yourself, a doctrine you are totally unacquainted with; and I tell you your courage is cowardice in the extreme. I tell you, the violent impulse of your passion, is a desertion of your reason; and your zeal to comply with the demands of false honour, proceeds from a *fear, a base fear* of meeting the foolish strictures of the world. With respect, sir, to what you call spirit, an *Italian bravo*, that stabs the innocent in disguise for hire, with propriety might boast the same. You must excuse me, sir, but I will convince you, by the cool indifference of my address to you, how little subject I am to intimidation from such wild spirits as you talk of; and I will still maintain the government over my own passions so strictly, as to tell you (while I reprove you with my patience under every harsh insult) that I sincerely pity your folly, and will cordially give you my hand this instant, but will not think of correcting it as your rashness richly deserves. A man, sir, who has bled, sir, bled plentifully by the hand of a father, in a duel which originated from the cruellest mistake, is perhaps justified, in all his objections, to the lawless decisions of the sword."

Bentley was long suspended between rage and relentings, when the last sentence of the young man's speech caught his ear; he started back in the greatest surprize, and dropping his sword, enquired if it was possible his name was *Barton*; to which the other answering in the affirmative, he flew eagerly towards him, and cordially grasping

ing his hand — “ Sir, fir, my dear Mr. *Barton*, what a providential escape have I experienced ! Heaven, fir, shall witness for me, rash as I am, I would not, if I knew your name, have aimed at spilling a drop of your blood for the universe. No, fir, I have heard your unhappy story, and relieved your drooping father in the height of his distress ; and should merit every visitation for attempting to add to the accumulated anguish you have suffered. Forgive me, fir, for my ignorance of your nature and your name ; and trust me fir, in future, I will ever honour you for the character I received from your father, and will pay an implicit respect to your counsel, from the discretion I have witnessed to in yourself. I have been, indeed, very rash, fir, and I believe the calmness of better reasoning has forsaken me, but I now thank you for rescuing me from further ruin, for my losses this evening have been indeed considerable, and I have made pretty free with the bottle, and was every way disqualified to bear rational expostulation with patience.

He then enquired after old Mr. *Barton*, and his daughter, mentioned the circumstance of his assisting his father ; and receiving for answer, that being arrived from *Brussels* but a few days, he had not yet been able to find out his father's abode in the country, but conceived he was in a right train for it ; as to his recovery, he said the loss of blood had reduced him very much, that soon after his father left *Brussels* he was recovered from a swoon, and that luckily, by the skilful

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assistance

assistance of a good surgeon, he was restored. That his putative mother was still alive, and had genteelly furnished him with effects to seek his father in *England*.

They passed the evening with the strictest harmony together; *Bentley* considerably improved upon Mr. *Barton's* opinion, and they promised a close connection of friendship and correspondence, at every future opportunity.

C H A P. XII.

LET us now look back to Miss *Bentley* in the country. That excellent creature had written two long letters to her lover, without a single line being sent in return; and she began to grow hopeless of all happiness, and to be inconsolable for the obdurate insensibility of his heart, that could prove faithless to repeated vows of fidelity, after having flattered her affections by every tender assiduity in his power. She would sometimes suspect
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the post might have possibly miscarried, but then it could hardly fail twice together; and again she would flatter herself into a persuasion, that, perhaps, he intended answering them in person; but upon referring to her brother's last letter, found no mention of their being prepared to return. Mr. *Bentley* beheld with the greatest concern, the loss of his *Betsy's* composure of mind, and took uncommon pains to sooth her grief, and pour the balm of consolation into her bosom. He would expostulate tenderly with her on the superfluity of her fears, impute the neglect of *Fairfield's* correspondence to the hurry of his engagements abroad, and flattered her that the next post might amply make amends for past silence, by producing a packet of letters. All this was very far from satisfying her fears. She was very sensible her father was not persuaded fully, that the reasons he assigned for her lover's neglect, were just ones, and that he rather studied to quiet her apprehensions by possible circumstances, than believed himself that his silence was *necessary* or *accidental*. She would therefore, out of respect to her father's council, suspend her tears in his presence, to indulge them with the greater luxury alone. She would constantly shut herself up in her closet upon all occasions, and weep as if her heart was breaking; but when summoned by her father to any domestic concern, would dry her eyes and endeavour to appear chearful. If the old gentleman endeavoured to amuse her with discourse upon any entertaining subject, she would strictly attend to every thing that passed, but was incapable

of discourse herself, and seldom gave more than a short negative or affirmative, when her opinion was questioned. She would sometimes be lost in a reverie when at table, and fancying she saw her lover sitting at his usual place beside her, she would lay down her knife and fork in an instant, and retire with precipitate confusion. She walked, whenever the weather would permit her, by the most unfrequented woods, and lonesome vallies, and sometimes repair to the favourite seat, and forget the hour of the day, in reflecting upon past pleasures. The melancholy murmur of the ring-dove suited her sorrow, and the hoarse current of the wild water-fall was adapted to the rude disorder of her mind. She would frequently ramble so far in these pensive soliloquies, as to be absent from home a whole day together, and then would creep back fainting for food, and sighing under mighty sorrows. Her little school was sadly disordered by her frequent absence, and her innocent pupils would tenderly sympathize with their darling mistress, and affectionately ask her why she wept? and whose heart could be so hard, as to give a moment's affliction to Miss *Bentley*?

C H A P.

C H A P. XIII.

SHE had begun working a waistcoat with flowers of her own fancy, when *Fairfield* left the country, and had intended to surprize him with an agreeable proof of her affection and ingenuity, on his return, but this was laid aside unfinished, as she suspected it was in vain to think of his returning tenderness any more. She would, however, sometimes take it, and resolve to finish the last sprig, or the last flower, and then begin a fresh leaf, and determine to finish that too, when a fearful emotion would surprize her heart; the tears would start into her eyes, and the needle drop down from her fingers. “No, she would say, the sight of this object of my past amusement, serves but to perplex my poor heart now with a thousand painful anxieties, and I will think of pursuing this work no more. When my temples shall cease to ache, and this hand shall be cold, he will see by what is done, how much I delighted to please him; and some more distinguished fair one, perhaps, may finish what I have begun.” This would constantly overwhelm her with an uncommon sensation, and her sobs would frequently bring her father from a distant room to

her assistance. She used constantly to play upon her harpsichord in her happier days, but she could fancy no pleasure in music now. And when the Robin sung his morning notes in the jessamin-tree, that grew round her casement, she would say there was music in every thing, but her own sad soul. Yet in all this accumulated distress of her own, the wants of others were never neglected; she felt, she said, double for the children of affliction, since she had been one herself, and was more studious to attend the sick, help the weary and comfort the aged, if possible, than she ever was before. "I see, she would say, the hand of heaven displayed in all its visitations upon its creatures. There is wisdom, there is goodness, in this cup of sorrow that is appointed for us; for it teaches us, I feel very strongly, it teaches us there is no rest on this side eternity. We have tears allotted us, that we may weep sore, and miseries too mighty to be endured for a long season: but the goodness of providence has given us soft hearts that they may soon break, and all our sorrows be forgotten." She was constantly at her devotions, and begging forgiveness of the Father of Spirits, for dividing her love of the Creator with one of his false creatures, and would pray for a speedy deliverance, and a shelter in that dark asylum where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

At times she would press her hand hard upon her forehead, and talk of a vast tumult in her brain, and argue that her head was tight bound, and objects swarm strangely before her. Then again

again she would fix her eyes, fold her hands, sit down, and be silent for hours together. She would fly to her pen and ink sometimes, begin a letter, and then scratch out what she had written; blot the paper and look wildly about her; then softly fasten her door, lay her head upon her handkerchief, and wonder she could weep no more. This cruelty convulsed her frame, and impaired in some degree her understanding. Her face grew very pale and languid, her eyes lost their lustre, and her shape was wasted to a shadow. She grew negligent in her dress, though she was still elegantly neat, and her fine hair wandered about her fair neck without any confinement at all. She would say, "I have done with ornaments, quite done. I use no flowers now; no, for here is no body to admire them; and it don't signify, perhaps; for this poor weak head must soon be laid low, and then who knows *what flowers may flourish* over it?"

C H A P. XIV.

AS the letters from town delayed coming, her anguish increased, and Mr. *Bentley* grew seriously alarmed for the health, as well as the happiness of his *Betsy*. He indeed began to suspect young *Fairfield's* affections were altered, but still conceived, as a few weeks must restore him to the country, that every thing would then be well again. This was his chief plea of comfort to his daughter, and his confidence in the character of the young man was so fully confirmed, by the artful disguise of his son's letters, that he had no suspicion of their having deviated in the minutest particular from those principles he had inculcated in their bosoms. Young *Bentley* professed himself so studiously warm on the side of virtue; praised his father's maxims so hypocritically, and talked of his inclination to throw himself at his feet so falsely, that the old man's candour was grossly deceived, and his credulity shamefully abused by his apostate inconsiderate son.

He one day took up a letter that his daughter had written to *Fairfield*, and left upon the table, and as he found it contained some strong and tender pictures of the situation of her mind, he
determined

determined to inclose it in one of his own, imagining it would induce him to return the sooner. Her letter was scrawled much and blotted, and no way connected, and ran thus :

“ So, fir ! it is to be sure very right, perhaps, that a poor presumptuous girl should bleed at her bosom, for believing what a false man told her about love and constancy, and all that. Well, fir, I am told there is much wisdom in heaven, and if we seek it as we ought, it is very sufficient for the weakest of us here : but I cannot say, upon my honour that I find it so ; for you must know, I do nothing but weep, fast, and pray ; and then I weep and fast, and pray again ; I think ; and yet it all won't do, for I am somehow very sick at heart, very sick indeed ! and there is no balm, no PHYSICIAN HERE. So thought I, if I told you my case truly, you might advise somebody to prescribe for me, and then who knows but I might be better a little ? But pray, fir, do not think I mean any body that has deserted and fled, and despised a poor girl, that always wished to make him happy, for that, you know, would not be delicate and proper, would it, fir ? After having written two very long letters, and received no answer. So you will not think, I hope, that *Betsy Bentley* can forget herself, and court a proud man to despise her ? But, fir, as I told you, I think somewhere, my heart aches very much at times, and my head too, and so I have done with sound peace, and intend to be very sorrowful in future. Though I am in a strange case, for my eyes are grown treacherous,

and they will not serve me as they used to do, for they will not weep at all, so I cannot help it. Well, sir, and then what do you think about my prayers? I kneel down by my bed-side, and beg of heaven to help me; but I begin to suspect that heaven is as faithless as somebody I know, and has deserted me likewise; and then you know, I dare say, *what must follow one day*. All this is very, very hard, is it not, sir? To have no peace, no truce, because of a false man's broken promise; and no hope of heaven, because my soul does not look that way! Indeed, sir, I think this a little hard, because it is not my fault, you know; and then how can I help myself? My papa thinks, sweet man, that, perhaps, you mean to return sometime or other, but that will not signify to me, will it sir? because my peace is of no consequence to any body, which is very odd, and very unaccountable. I used to think once, that death would do me a great deal of good, and join my spirit to the spirits of the just made perfect; but things are altered very much of late, and, upon my word, I cannot say I ever shall be happy. So, sir, it is very well—I *cannot last always*."

C H A P. XV.

IN this rambling strain did the young lady constantly indulge herself, when her mind was most disturbed, but at other times she would be more collected, and talk very sensibly for a season, and then again relapse into a melancholy, and ramble as before.

This letter was directly dispatched, inclosed in the old gentleman's to his son, and was delivered by *Bentley* to *Fairfield*, as he was playing at cards to gratify the avarice of *Miss Melbourn*. He begged leave to open it in her presence, and was visibly affected by its contents; his countenance changed, and his hand trembled; he apologized for his sudden indisposition, and begged leave to retire, in very great confusion. He hastened home to his chamber, and shutting himself up, read over the letter again, and again, and was astonished at his own baseness. My dear *Betsy* shall not be forsaken, said he, she is much dearer to me than ever, and I will write instantly the most tender letter I can suggest, to calm her fears,
and

and to assure her of my firm adherence to every former profession. Shall I neglect such grace, such goodness! no, no, forbid it every thing that is sacred, I will sooner tear Miss *Melbourn* from my heart for ever, and give my *Betsy* that undivided affection she so much deserves. He directly put his resolution in practice, and dispatched away, by that night's post, the tenderest assurances of his fidelity, and a promise of being with her in person in a very few weeks at farthest.

This letter had every happy effect upon the constitution of Miss *Bentley*, it was a cordial to the sick, and a reprieve to the dying. She read it, and wept for joy, and pressed it to her bosom. The heart of the old man danced within him; the young lady mended daily, and peace visited them as before. Mr. *Bentley* would laugh at his love-sick girl, and Miss *Betsy* blamed herself for her doubts, and recovered very fast from her drooping situation. The rose upon her cheek began faintly to blush again, her eyes to regain their lustre, and her whole frame gradually rose again to perfection.

When *Fairfield* came to consult with his pillow, and to call a council with his heart, he found Miss *Melbourn* had considerable hold upon his affections, and it was difficult to think of renouncing her for ever; however, he acknowledged his lovely *Betsy* had every prior, every better claim, and resolved to sacrifice every thing in her favour. "I will not visit Miss *Melbourn* so often as I have
done

done, and by absenting myself from her company, I shall grow indifferent about her by degrees." He determined to send a card to excuse himself from an appointment he had made with her next day, and proposed pursuing a plan of distant politeness towards her, during the remainder of his stay in town.

C H A P. XVI.

YOUNG *Bentley* was daily plunging into fresh disgrace, and involving himself in new ruin. Nothing weighed with him, nothing restrained him. The principles of religion were despised, the restrictions of morality ridiculed, and the obligations of honour violated on every occasion. He felt himself in the situation of a man, who was shortly to take a long leave of the gay world, the rational world, as he called it; and he determined to

to spare no excess his circumstances and his freedom would admit of.

He had been conducted one evening by a courtesan to an house of ill-fame, and staying pretty late, had drank an immoderate quantity of liquor. The lady, who was conversant with her business, was very willing to avail herself of his insensibility, and very politely took occasion to make free with his purse, containing about twelve guineas. Upon calling for the reckoning, he soon discovered a small deficiency in his finances; he charged the lady with having picked his pocket, and ordered a constable to be called to take charge of the party. The drawer directly retired, and the lady began her defence in form. She affected to shed a deluge of tears, called upon all the saints to witness to her innocence, protested her affection for him was so fervent, that she could bear any thing, but so cruel a charge from such a quarter; and then piously hoped he would not go to take away a poor woman's *character*, who had nothing else to trust to; and urged a variety of pleas: But *Bentley* was inflamed with wine, and remained inexorable to all her solicitations. She then instantly changed her tone: abused him with the greatest violence, used all illiberal language, and insisted, it was a sin and a shame, and a scandalous business, for him to attempt the *chastity* of a married woman, and that if her poor dear husband was to know how she had been used, his bones would go near to pay for it. She had no sooner spoke the word, than her poor dear husband appeared, and without much ceremony began

gan the attack upon *Bentley*, and at the first blow levelled him with the floor. Our Hero recovered himself with all convenient expedition, and made an orthodox application to the face of his adversary, which was instantly repaid with strict sincerity, and poor *Bentley's* nose bled very profusely; he returned, however, to the charge as soon as he was able, and received so harsh a compliment in one of his eyes, that victory had certainly declared in favour of the other, if a third person had not accidentally joined the field of battle, and given a cast in favour of our young hero. This gentleman was no other than Mr. *Thomas Caxton*, of facetious memory, who had that night been making some small sacrifice at the shrine of *Venus*, and was engaged in close conversation with a draggled-tail gypsy in the tap-room when he heard the confusion above stairs: he flew immediately to the scene of action, and no sooner discovered the features of his fellow-traveller, than he instantly prepared a zealous salutation for his antagonist, and without the least preface or apology, applied himself so closely to business that in two minutes the other cried out lustily for quarter. *Tom*, however, paid every rough compliment in his power, and then cordially shaking *Bentley's* hand, owned he was heartily glad to see him, told him, he smoked the first cause of the quarrel, and was very glad he came so seasonably to his assistance; for egad, my dear boy, if you had happened to have had the worst of the argument with this gentleman, I would not give three halfpence for your chance, I do assure you. *Bentley*
thanked

thanked *Tom* for his assistance, and the other gave the following account of himself since their parting at *Gloucester*. *Tom* first, however, discharged the reckoning, because the lady, for some private reasons best known to herself, had very quietly withdrawn at the beginning of the fray, fearing, perhaps, to interrupt the gentlemen in the business they had in hand.

They walked out of the house together, and as it was pretty dark, *Bentley's* pride was not so much mortified by the meanness of *Tom's* appearance, as his curiosity was excited by the singularity of his character.

C H A P. XVII.

“SIR, said *Tom*, after we parted at *Gloucester*, I marched briskly on, enjoying my fresh pipe, and planning future operations, for the great scene of life, the town, when I beheld, a little from the road side, a company of men and women, consisting of about half a dozen families, dancing to the sound of a fractured fiddle, and others jovially carousing to some wild notes of their own invention. They seemed so much in my own way, that for the life of me I could not refrain from clambering over a six-foot hedge with eagerness to get at them. They immediately rose up together like so many wild Indians at my approach (struck, perhaps, with the dignity of my air, and the gentility of my whole figure) and cordially invited me to accept of a mess of broth from their kettles, which would soon boil, they said; and in the mean time, handed me a large jug of excellent October, and desired me to drink heartily. Now, sir, if they had known me, that charge would have been let alone, but as it was, I very practically seconded the gentleman’s motion, and applied myself so closely to the jorum, as
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to convince them, I was very susceptible of good instruction. This put me into an excellent humour, and I offered my service to scrape a tune upon their crazy violin, and so set the brutes to dancing as *Orpheus* did of old. We very soon, by this means, began to understand each other; and as a rambling thought just then popt into my pate, I determined to incorporate myself with the fraternity without more delay. I proposed my scheme, which was joyfully accepted; and as their ceremonies were pretty brief, and had no counting of *hob nails*, and such things as stagger great men in corporate capacities, I was soon initiated into their mysteries; and after tenderly saluting all the nut-brown beauties one by one, and shaking my brother wanderers cordially by each hand, I was as firmly established a member, as if I had belonged to the honourable society for many years, and had stolen all the poultry of a parish. I soon found I had to do with gentlemen of liberal conceptions; and that they had a convenient set of notions, that served all turns to a nicety. Their government was democratical in the finest sense of that fine word; and as we did not always find it convenient to abide by that strict line of conduct which is prescribed to his Majesty's liege subjects, we acted in a very extensive sphere, and enlarged upon the laws as we saw occasion. Like the *Israelites* of old, we religiously borrowed of our neighbours as much of their property as we could lay our hands upon, and after the example of the primitive christians, we possessed all things in common. Excepting a little confusion that daily arose from the gallantry of the gentlemen, and
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the infidelity of the ladies, we always observed the strictest harmony and decorum; and if it had not been for a little thieving now and then, I do assure you, I never met with a more honest set of men, in all my dealings with mankind. They were strictly well bred in their own way, and so uniformly polite, that when the caravan halted at any favourite pastoral spot to rest them from the fatigues of the day, the ladies in one gravel-pit always sent a polite invitation to the ladies in another gravel-pit, and hoped to have the pleasure of their company at tea. Respecting our living, I'll be shot, if my Lord-Mayor lived better; while there was a duck in a pond, or a goose upon a common, we never wanted provision, and poor reynard has often been threatened for the havock we made among the poultry: these were all artfully deposited in the hampers that were carried by asses; and with regard to our wardrobe, that did not so much signify. The ladies were all sweet daughters of nature, and so much superior to common decency and decorum, that you would have thought they had been educated at court, or at the first boarding schools in *England*. Then they had so agreeable a way of reasoning in defence of their taste, that the furliest Cynic living must have been pleased with them. They would plead that nature is above art; and insist that there were neither linen-draper's nor mantua-makers in mother *Eve's* time: and they would dance naked by dozens."

C H A P. XVIII.

“**I**T was a way of life pleased me beyond measure. We had no care either for to-day or to-morrow, and after the toil of a long journey we would seat us round our kettle, under the shadow of some hollow tree, tell old stories, and regale us with the fruits of our ingenuity. On these occasions I never forgot to light my pipe, and as my passion for poetry was nothing abated, I used to listen with pleasure to the distant tinkling of sheep bells, when the shepherd drove his flock to fold, and the lark's last song would charm me. I would laugh inwardly at the misery of wealth, when I beheld the poor herdsman returning from his day's work, whistling with his empty bottle at his back, and seeking sacred home. The music of the hedges sunk into my ear, and the gradual decline of all the vernal beauties about me, calmed me into the gentlest of tranquility; and when the wet dews warned us to shelter, I could sink upon a truss of clean straw, and envy not luxury her down.

My person is prettily distinguished you know,
and you may depend upon it I did not want for
amours.

amours. By turns I believe I threw my handkerchief at the whole seraglio, but fixed my constant affections more particularly upon a fine elegant wench, who wore neither shoes nor stockings, and about whose fine turned neck, the ebon tresses flowed negligently down, or waved in the wind in wanton ringlets. *She was as straight as some Norwegian pine!* and graceful beyond all the sisterhood, and half the barns in *Gloucestershire* can witness to the ardour, the constancy of my affections.

Well, sir, I believe, for three weeks that I led this life, I was verily the happiest fellow the sun smiled upon, and laughed and sung, with old and young, from sun rising to sun setting, and proposed, as they kept travelling to the south, to follow them to the antipodes, if they chose it. But, sir, you shall hear. One day having marched further than common, and being particularly fatigued, we were obliged to submit to very indifferent quarters, at a little farm-house upon a common: being rather straitened for room, not expecting so much good company, my darling and I took very comfortable possession of a pig-sty, where some clean pease holms had been thrown in that evening. We had some trouble in turning out the old fat tenant, not having given legal warning; but at length, by kicking the old sow heartily at the wrong end, we served her with a writ of ejectment, and very quietly took us to repose.

Next

Next morning, sir, upon waking pretty late, and tumbling the litter about in search of my *better self, the dear object of my affections*, what was my unspeakable surprize, to find herself and the whole caravan departed without me! and what added to my trouble was, that by some unaccountable mistake, my darling had taken my breeches along with her. This was a loss not easy to be repaired, because, as I told you before, my wardrobe was confined for certain reasons. The incorrect state of my linen added not a little to my dilemma, and I remained some time undetermined, whether to take to my heels by some bye-road, or to wait till it was dark before I set out upon my travels. These doubt were however, very soon settled, for the old savage, perhaps partly through resentment at the ungenteel treatment she met with over night, had rambled into the farmer's garden, and desolated all the fruits of a long labour. She destroyed in that dreadful night three beds of cabbages, two of young favoys, and demolished all the beans that came near her, besides overturning a large potatoe-bed, treading down all the flowers, and laying waste every thing before her. This so enraged the farmer, that he vowed most desperate vengeance, if he could find out the person who turned her out of her sty. This you may be sure was a very comfortable hearing for poor *Tom*. By the dignity of my family, I would at that instant freely have changed situations with an emperor. A fine perspiration diffused itself over my whole body, when I heard
the

the angry blade driving the offender before him to her old habitation. My teeth chattered, and, as *Bobadil* says, I was planet-struck at that instant. However, as no time was to be lost, I covered myself up close in the litter, and began to breathe very short, when I heard the door of the sty open, and the savage grunting at my elbow. She began directly to toss the litter about with her nose, and I was in an instant discovered; nothing can describe the delicacy of my situation, or the rage of the inflamed farmer at that moment. He ran to seize a large stick that was near him, and I cleared the pailing like a greyhound. Away I flew without ceremony through the yard, where a poor innocent girl was milking, and disconcerted the œconomy of her spirits to that degree, that she set up a loud scream, and overset the pail before her. This brought an old woman out of the house to her assistance, who finding what was the matter, bawled for *John* and *Thomas* so lustily, that I was presently beset at all quarters. To be short, sir, they gave me a very orthodox drubbing between them, and I was obliged to make my escape at last over the garden wall, in a situation not much to be envied. I then made the best use of my freedom I was able, and keeping to bye paths, and avoiding all public ways, walked the whole day without meeting any passenger, and, for once in my life, forgot a little of my laughter. As evening advanced I resolved to prepare a hiding-place near an old barn, that I might creep in unperceived when it grew dark. I sat me down in a hollow tree, and luckily finding an hard crust
in

in my pocket, I procured a little water in the corner of my hat from a rivulet, made a cheerful light meal, and began to whistle a new tune, to comfort me after the troubles of the day. I had fallen into a sort of a soliloquy, respecting what path in life I should pursue next, when a voice very near me, as of one speaking to himself, made me startle. I looked round me, and perceived a little man with a paper of verses in his hand, reading alternately, and then setting down something with his pencil, and seemed to be in the highest raptures with every happy thought that occurred to him. As he did not at first perceive me, I listened, and distinctly heard him repeat as follows."

C H A P.

C H A P. XIX.

L I F E; an Anacreontic O D E.

*“ Reason thus with life ;
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep.”*

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

LADY Muse shall chaunt anon,
Like old bard *Anacreon* ;
Not thy spirit, but thy plan,
Laughing grey-beard, happy man !
Nimbly tript thy chime away,
Merry Greek of ancient day.
What is life, its term, and tale ?
Passing shadows in a vale.
Mortal minutes short and few,
Scatter'd like the morning dew :
'Tis a garden wild, where grows
Here a thorn, and there a rose.
'Tis a cloister, 'tis a tomb,
'Tis a change of light and gloom :
'Tis a spirit brisk and warm,
'Tis a pilgrim in a storm ;

K

'Tis

'Tis a story brief to tell,
 'Tis a taper in a cell.
 Little spark of feeble light !
 Struck from Chaos elder night ;
 Cherish'd still in human urns,
 Now it blazes, now it burns :
 Now it flows in rapid tides,
 Now it droops, and now subsides :
 Now it lights the poet's pen,
 Such is *Life*, and what are *Men*?
 Atoms in the solar beam,
 Dancing bubbles in a stream ;
 Vapours fashio'd by a breeze,
 Aspin leaves on brittle trees ;
 Glimmering lights that rise in rain,
 Set in evening tears again.
 Strange œconomists, that keep
 Hearts to ache, and eyes to weep :
 Sighs to pass, and tears to flow,
 Mighty magazines of woe :
 Withering as the gather'd grass,
 Pension'd on the smiling glass.
 Fed by folly, rear'd by rules,
 Nurs'd in art, and taught in schools.
 Taught from dusty death to fly,
 Taught to brave his lance and die.
 Taught to pick from sordid briers,
 All the aids that life requires.
 Taught to plow the deep for gain ;
 Taught to reap the bearded plain.
 Taught in polish'd paths to run ;
 Taught to launch beyond the fun.
 Still from art to art they turn,
 Much they teach, and little learn :

How

How the annual seasons roll,
 Where the south and northern pole ;
 With the friendly star that guides,
 Sailors charts thro' winds and tides.
 When the planets interfere,
 When the dark eclipse is near :
 Glorious scientific suns,
 Kindle as the journey runs ;
 Still they soar and still they shine,
 And catch a spark of ray divine :
 Though they see with light profound,
 Girt the mighty globe around,
 Still they to themselves are blind,
 Still contract the heart and mind.
 What were *Newton, Locke and Boyle* ?
 Men that wasted midnight oil.
 What the glorious themes they taught ?
Dawning of immortal thought.
 What the learned lights we trust ?
 Darknes visible in dust.
 Books of knowledge load our shelves ;
 Men know all things but themselves.
 Inconsistent things are we,
 Dive to soar, and wink to see ;
 Toil to rest, and laugh to cry ;
 Wake to sleep, and live to die.
 On the self-same brow are seen,
 Scornful frowns, and looks serene :
 And the self-same forehead bears
 Auburn locks, and silver hairs.
 Now the blooming cheeks engage,
 Now they're furrow'd o'er with age.
 Now the busy heart contains
 Hopes and fears, and joys and pains.

We love and hate, carefs, betray,
 Abound and want, and ferve, and fway.
 Now we dance with fprightlier air,
 Now we grasp the crutch with care.
 Rear-to-day the fplendid dome,
 To-morrow make the grave our home.
 Welcome threefcore years and ten,
 If fuch is Life, and fuch are Men.

C H A P.

C H A P. XX.

HERE he stopped, just by the hollow oak I sat in, and seemed very much surprized to find a stranger so near him. He saluted me with courtesy, in a sort of a pastoral stile, but with so much honesty and good nature, that I was encouraged briefly to lay the state of my case before him: he seemed pleased with the comical circumstances of my adventures, and told me, if I would go with him to his little humble habitation hard by, he would accommodate me with any thing in his power. I chearfully accepted his offer; and as we walked together, had an opportunity of remarking the singularity of his dress, and his strange manner of discoursing. He was a little smiling figure, about five feet and an inch high, dressed in a suit of plain green cloth, and had a sort of cap upon his head of the same colour; he had a small book in one hand, and a little ivory tablet in the other. His shoes were tied together with green ribband, and his whole appearance seemed to imitate the stile of Arcadia. When I spoke to him occasionally, he would appear to be absent, and then repeating half a stanza, would

beg my pardon ; but owned, he was in full pursuit of a bright thought, and should have lost it for ever, if he had dropped the chace a moment. Then he would refer to his tablet, and rub his hands as in an extasy, and go on as before.

We soon reached a snug thatched house, situated in a calm retired part of the wood, in the center of as neat a garden as my eyes ever beheld. The walls were whitewashed, and the honeysuckles wanted wildly about a pretty decent porch at the door. There was an arbour of jessamine on one side the house, and a sort of roothouse, rudely put together, on the other. The furniture was of a piece with the external appearance of the dwelling, very plain and neat, and rather proved the simplicity, than the taste of the owner. I was soon accommodated with what I wanted, and the little man and I began to understand each other perfectly. He set a bottle of grape wine upon the table, and the glass soon put me into an excellent humour ; so I sung him some choice catches, and began to grow mightily into favour. He would occasionally beg leave to repeat some verses he preferred to all his compositions, and very condescendingly would point out to me those excellencies I did not clearly comprehend, and call that thought a happy one, and that metaphor a close one, and that picture a fine one ; and, in short, by the time the second bottle was brought in, we both pronounced him the prettiest poet of the age. He told me in brief his story. ‘ I was born, says he, to strict independence ; my grand-
mama

mama (blessings on the old woman's memory) left me a clear unincumbered estate of fifty pounds per annum. I am derivated from a perfectly genteel family, who took a pious interest in my early tuition. When my mental optics, sir, my intellectual vision began to be confirmed, I looked round the habitable creation like other pilgrims in this state of terrestrial imperfection, in search of what the sons of men denominate felicity. While I took my degrees of classical erudition, and groaned beneath the scourge of a pedantic tyrannic fellow, I looked forward with supreme delight to the moment that was to set me free from the fetters of grammar, and the subordination of a student. The time came, sir, at last, and I was again fettered, for seven years, to a vile mechanical creature, in the capacity of an apprentice, and grew more dissatisfied than before. At the expiration of that excruciating term, I welcomed sacred freedom, and began to serve as a deputy to the same honest member of society, with whom I had before been bound. The conception of being free to relinquish my employ when ever it grew insufferable, kept me in a state of tranquility for some time; till at length the infelicities of a single life harrowed up my whole soul. I therefore rivetted my most refined affections upon the personal and mental graces of a young lady, and got myself most exquisitely in love; endured all the tender tortures of flattering hope and frightful fear; dropt the sweet pathetic sentence into her auricular organ, and moved the loveliest sensibilities of her soft heart in my favour: wiping away the trickling

dew-drop of tender sympathy that flowed down the blushing cheek of beauty, I imprinted the balmy odoriferous salutation upon her coral lips ; and, in short, led her in a short time to the altar, and consummated the rites of chaste connubial love. Then, sir, I said for one whole month together, “ *Hail wedded love, mysterious law !* ” but after that time, I began to think of the transport of a single life with regret, since that state was mine no more. So, sir, I began to grow weary of the transports that the nuptial tie is capacitated to furnish, and betook me to the joys of wine. In the erudite society of the choice spirits, I enjoyed felicity for the space of three rising and setting suns ; at the end of which happy period, the potations of Bacchus so overpowered the finer organization of my brain, and the animal spirits were driven with such impetuosity through the spinal marrow up to my cerebellum, that, sir, I was so darkened and bereft of sound wit, as to demolish a few lamps, and trip up the heels of half a dozen of the piquet-guard of London ; and so, sir, was carried to *durance vile*, and with great difficulty preserved from *Newgate*. This so operated, sir, upon my timidity, that felicity again failed me, and I resolved to look to music to restore the harmony of my mind. Music prevailed but for a brief season ; the same tunes soon grew wearisome ; I called for more harmony like a dis-tempered man ; and, in short, turned my sublime ideas to nobler speculations.

C H A P. XXI.

“I Then studied the starry lamps of night, like a *Chaldean* shepherd, for some time, with very great success and felicity, when one night pursuing my indefatigable researches at the top of the house, with my tube levelled at *Venus*, that planet served me a jade’s trick, and led my unthinking foot to the sky-light of a neighbour’s habitation, and precipitated me, with a violent noise and confusion, plump into the maid’s garret. The noise soon disturbed the people of the house, and unluckily, among the rest, the matronly good woman of the dwelling, who was wakened out of her first sleep, and missing her husband, ran up stairs with a rush-light, and discovered that her deary had gone astray with Mrs. *Susan*, and was preparing for a precipitate retreat without his vestments, when his wife met him at the door. The confusion soon began to grow universal, and I was complimented with a very savage chastisement, and taught to be more careful in consulting the planets in future. After this, sir, I questioned if felicity dwelt with wit, and received no answer. So I writ a delightful

collection of pastoral odes and elegies, and published a book for the perusal of a few select friends. Indeed there was no great wit in that ; however, sir, I felt my talent, my passion, my genius, my judgment, lay so exactly in that line, that I resolved to withdraw to some sequestered corner, and tune my oaten reed, to charm the flocks that feed in the valley, lawn or mead, and grow a bard indeed ; my spouse, the tender participater of all my cares, readily consented to be regulated by my superior light of reason, so we retired from the rude commercial croud, that waste immortal time in busy care, and intend leading a life like *Palemon* and *Lavinia*, cultivating every joy the muse and peace can give us. I now and then oblige the literati with some stanzas in the *Lady's Magazine*, and had just compleated the best thing I ever composed in my life, when lady Fortune threw you in my way. I lead a peaceful unambitious existence in these shades, and range the mountains with contentment at radiant morn, and gentle eve, and my *Phyllis* smiles ever upon me.

Here his wife, a pretty modest creature, came in, and joined our discourse, and I think I never was happier in my life than I was that evening. He shewed me to a charming little room to rest in, and the next morning good naturedly gave me a few shillings for my pocket, saying he was sorry he could not give me more ; but assured me in all his researches after happiness, he never looked for it in *avarice*. After putting me in
the

the right road, we parted. It was a charming fine morning, and I had lit my pipe as usual, and was in choice spirits. As I trudged along I could not help laughing heartily at the bombast, with which my kind host had entertained me, but thought at the time I had heard something very much in the same stile, from *some polite preachers in the city.*"

C H A P. XXI.

"I Had reached the high road, and had walked within two miles of the next town, when I beheld a stoppage in the way, and making up to the spot, I found a waggon and a post-chaise standing together, and the two drivers engaged furiously by the ears. A gentleman was swearing like a thief-taker in the carriage, but the post-boy was too deeply engaged to mind him. He was just about to make a third in the sharp encounter, when he spying me out, offered me a crown

crown to drive the chaise, and bid the postillion follow. The temptation of so large a sum induced me to mount, who had never mounted before, but not being used to ride bay trotting horses o'er four inch bridges, like mad *Tom* in *King Lear*, I was no sooner seated in the saddle, than a severe kicking ensued. I held the bridle so tight, that the poor beast reared up an end, and sent me clean into the dirt behind. Well, sir, the man in the chaise raised his voice, I believe three keys, on the strength of my miscarriage, and I began to apprehend a severe horse-whipping, when a lucky device came into my head, which I put in immediate execution. By looking in the boot of the chaise, I discovered a small quantity of oats, which the cattle seemed to want more than the whippcord; so I put the corn in my hat, and shaking it at the horses noses, I set off in a round trot, and the poor devils followed briskly after. To be sure the novelty of the scene excited a little curiosity, but it was very lucky that manœuvre occurred to me, as I afterwards learned, the person in the chaise was no less than a parliament man, who was piously contributing to ruin half a score of the noblest animals in the creation, that he might be present at the passing of the dog act, which he conceived to be an affair of national importance.

The landlord of the inn took such notice of my ingenuity, that he engaged to take me into his service as a waiter, if I chose it. My finances were not very flourishing, so I determined to make
a bit

a bit of a purse, before I pursued my journey any further. I soon acquitted myself in my new station to the entire satisfaction of my master. I understood mixing British spirits with the wine; and scattering old saw-dust upon new bottles, and could make a bounce with my mouth at the side-table when I drew, a cork, that was but just before put in. I perfectly understood letting a shabby guest ring till his arm ached, and could breathe into the glasses at dinner time, and could wipe them with my greasy towel in very great perfection. I took care to put my fingers into every dish I carried to table, to prevent accidents to the customers, and always attended to take the plates away before they were half done with. This recommended me to the notice of all the gentlemen who frequented the house, and among the rest, the vicar of the parish, whom I constantly led home every evening, was so charmed with my docility, that he promised me I should succeed his clerk, who was very infirm, and a vacancy happened within a fortnight after. The novelty of that way of life determined me to engage in it, for a little time, in hopes of making a particular patron of my clerical friend, at some future opportunity. I kept his cassock in repair during the week, and exalted my voice on *Sundays*. I sung sol fa with a *laudable* quaver, and gave away maidens who preferred *private* matrimony; said Amen with a good grace, and served diligently for five weeks successively. At the end of which time I was dismissed in disgrace, on account of my being seized with one of my immoderate laughing fits, in the middle of one of my old friend's

friend's most pathetic sermons, which set the church into so good a humour, that the peals of laughter in a play-house could scarcely equal it. The dogs yelped, the women tuttered, the men indulged themselves to the extent of their lungs, and the confusion grew universal. I was dismissed immediately after service, with a very severe reprimand, and a small gratuity, and posted to town without further adventures. I have been in town but a few days, and am at present returned to my old trade of combing wigs, and in fine circumstances. This evening I picked up an handmaid in the hundreds of *Drury*, and took her to the house where I was so fortunate and so happy as to do you service." *Bentley* thanked *Tom* for his assistance, ordered him to call for the money he had advanced for the reckoning, and parted from him in his way home.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIII.

WE have observed young *Fairfield's* principles were not near so libertine as those of his friend *Bentley*; but still he had departed very far from the rational severity of his education; he had engaged in many affairs of gallantry, and considerably injured his ideas of moral rectitude, by conversing with characters, who either despised restraint, or contended for a latitude of conduct. He reflected, however, upon the receipt of Miss *Bentley's* letter; that he had much to charge himself with, on account of neglecting that very amiable young lady; felt many tender emotions of regret, for the unhappy state of heart and mind, to which he had so undeservedly reduced her; and determined to act as we have related, in regard to Miss *Sophia Melbourn* for the future. But these were hasty impressions, formed on the surprize the young lady's letter had thrown him into; and hasty resolutions, resulting from a temporary conflict of the passion, rather gratify the heart for the moment, than lay the foundation for a future consistency of behaviour. It is true, he retired to rest full of the image of his

his *Betsy*; sleep gave way to reflection, and all his ideas centered on the excellency of his *Betsy*, and he awoke the next morning, fully confirmed in his intention, to wipe away all traces of what had passed between him and Miss *Melbourn*, and dedicate his future life to atone for the cruelty of his late behaviour, in relation to Miss *Bentley*. He was conscious of the superiority of her intrinsic worth, and the obligations he had repeatedly laid himself under, to observe the strictest fidelity towards her. All these considerations united with full force in favour of his contrition, and he passed the next day without paying the most distant respect to Miss *Melbourn*. We will now see how that young lady behaved, in consequence of such treatment.

Miss *Sophia Melbourn*, with all the errors of her heart, was not so despicably deficient in her understanding, but she could display the natural cunning of her sex, whenever there was occasion, to very great advantage. Her insensibility of disposition, was a never failing security against any prejudices that might result from the tender passion; and therefore, though her pride might be piqued by the inattention of her lover, her affections were totally disengaged, and no mortification could reach her heart, but what affected her consequence in the polite circle. She would attend to every little notice paid her in public, by men of the most contemptible abilities, with pleasure, and receive the grossest adulation from the most insignificant coxcombs, that would add to the number of her train.

Young

Young *Fairfield's* genteel figure therefore contributed to gratify her vanity, in every public company, and she could not think of losing him so soon with patience. For indeed she began to suspect some prior engagement in the country; and the confusion he betrayed on the receipt of the letter, and his neglect of his appointment next day, fully convinced her, that some art must be employed to retrieve him, or he was lost for ever.

As *Bentley* visited at her house on a familiar footing, she learned from him, that his friend had received some disagreeable news out of the country, and that he would not be fit for company for some time; but, says *Bentley*, I laugh the poor fellow out of his whimsies, as well as I can, and propose taking him to night to *Venice Preserved*, in hopes to divert his attention a little from a nasty gloomy habit of thinking, that at times possesses him. The lad is clever enough, and has something to say for himself; but that cursed notion of reflection, upon every foolish occasion, makes a puppy of the fellow, and disqualifies him for every choice society in the world. Miss *Melbourn*, my dear madam, I left him at home this morning as melancholy as a cat, and weeping like a whining grey-beard in a hermitage. The fellow has no life, no sense, no soul, no vivacity, upon my soul, miss: ha! ha! ha!—well, well, I hope to make something of him, however, this evening, and if Miss *Melbourn* will permit me to
secure

secure a place for her in one of the front boxes, I do not doubt, ma'am, but we shall put a little life into the animal, and revive him much sooner than the doctors. The lady perceived *Bentley* was ignorant of his friend's behaviour towards her, and therefore pleaded a particular previous engagement with a very agreeable party, and was sorry she could not accept of his very genteel proposal. *Bentley*, however, proposed to *Fairfield* going to the play that evening; and as the latter suspected, from the conversation that the young lady was mortified by his neglect, he resolved at once to compleat his triumph, and to observe the strictest indifference in her presence.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIV.

HE dressed himself to the best advantage, and being seated in one of the front boxes, waited the arrival of his mistress with impatience. The young lady came late, that the greater notice might be taken by the company, and took her seat in the next box to *Fairfield*: she was accompanied by a young gentleman of a genteel appearance, and a young lady his sister. *Fairfield* observed her obliquely with some emotion, and imagined she had never appeared to so much advantage before. He affected, however, an uncommon attention to the play, and watched every syllable that escaped the lips of Mrs. *Barry* in the character of *Belvidera*, with the rapture and respect, that elegant and judicious woman is always sure to inspire. Miss *Melbourn* observed his studied disrespect, and determined to shew every contempt for it in her power. She was, in every respect, fashionably indifferent to the play, and employed her eyes in gazing carelessly about her; admiring the old lady's youth, and the antiquity of her daughter's features; passing strictures upon dress, and looking through her glass at every figure that was striking. She affected to be pleased with a thousand little pretinences in the discourse of the gentleman that
was

was with her, and would be continually putting her fan before her face, and referring to his opinion in a whisper. Then she would drop her glove, to receive it from him with a smile; and looking with an affected languor into the next box, assume a gravity of face, and as soon as she caught young *Fairfield's* eye, would studiously nod her head at Mr. *Bentley*, and display the artillery of her charms to every advantage.

Fairfield was not sensible of his weakness, till his strength was put to the trial, but soon began to perceive, he had flattered himself with a notion of independance too rashly; he was little conversant with the female world, and imagined he should find Miss *Melbourn* particularly chagrined at his indifference, but little expected to be foiled at his own weapons. He set the absent beauty full before his eyes, but though her graces lived strongly in his memory, her presence was absolutely necessary to counteract the influence Miss *Melbourn* began to assume over his heart. He had never positively determined to relinquish her altogether, and his resolution at once failed him. He could not help taking particular notice between the acts of the deference she seemed to pay the young gentleman, and wished he had not so precipitately forfeited her favour. He began to regard her person again through the most prejudiced medium, and conceived, though her features were separately incorrect, yet that collectively they appeared to very great advantage. He sat uneasy in his seat, and in spite of all the tuneful numbers of
Mr.

Mr. *Otway*, delivered by the angelical creature Mrs. *Barry*, he could not attend to the most interesting part of the play, for looking almost constantly at Miss *Melbourn*. The lady perceived this, and improved every advantage; she seemed lost to every thing but the performance, and in that pathetic scene, when the superior tenderness of *Belvidera* disarms the impetuous fury of her husband, she condescended to take out a fine cambrick handkerchief to enjoy the luxury of her triumph unperceived. Poor *Fairfield* imagining it was the effect of her sensibility, was uncommonly infatuated, and imagining, likewise, her distress might partly proceed from his contemptuous treatment, was resolving to speak to her as soon as the play should be finished, when, to his unspeakable surprize, she soon recovered from her affected sorrow, and, with eyes sparkling with pleasure, coquetted with the young gentleman as before. This, however, was very far from giving a new train to his thoughts; his ideas were full of Miss *Melbourn*, and he went home as soon as the play was over to study some possible reconciliation with that haughty lady. He accordingly waited upon her next morning, and professed himself extremely unhappy that he was debarred the supreme pleasure of attending her to the playhouse the preceding evening; hoped no exception had been taken to his behaviour, which must ever be perfectly respectful to a lady of such distinguished merit; and was very sorry that an unexpected account of the illness of a particular friend in the country, had so disconcerted him,

as

as to prevent the fulfilment of his engagement ; but should be proud, on every future opportunity, to evince to all the world, how much his felicity depended on the smiles of the accomplished Miss *Melbourn*.

C H A P. XXV.

THIS unnatural mode of delivering himself, the reader is sensible, was never taught him by his tutor, and therefore it shews how soon the language of truth and sincerity is forgotten in refined circles, and an affected speciousness of profession adopted in its stead. This was language perfectly understood by the lady, and she replied in the same stile, That she wished every one to consult their own felicity, and did not wish by any means that Mr. *Fairfield* should account to her for his conduct ; she begged leave to suggest, that the general laws of good breeding were very easy to be understood, but she could not consider herself answerable for the gross mistakes of other people, and that it was impossible to put a favourable construction upon a studied neglect of politeness, because the behaviour of a gentleman,

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in her esteem, ought always to be uniform and consistent. She was sorry an engagement to pay a morning visit obliged her to leave him so abruptly, and then politely wished him a good day. *Fairfield* was mute with amazement at her coolness, and was at some loss how to behave; when perceiving she was about to quit the room, he eagerly seized her hand, and with tears in his eyes, said, "My dear and adorable Miss *Melbourn*, you must, indeed, you must forgive me. I will make every concession, every atonement, and challenge some distant notice of your approbation by every assiduity in my power. Believe me, madam, I cannot support this indifference, and unless you will deign to forget what is past, and kindly receive me once more into some degree of favour, I will never quit this supplicating posture, but here continue to gaze on the exquisite beauties of your face, and solicit your smiles for ever." This was almost too much for the lady's risibility; however, she appeared to be proportionably concerned, and affectedly turning away her face, faintly desired him to rise, and not to trifle with her clemency in future. Thus matters were again adjusted, and he visited on the same familiar footing as before.

As the day was arriving very fast, when he expected to quit London, perhaps for ever, his passion increased; and as he considered Miss *Bentley* to be partly the occasion of his father's importunity to recall him, he more than half repented of the letter he had sent her; but resolved

solved to take no farther notice of her, while he continued in town, and, if possible, to break from her for ever. The forward confident behaviour of Miss *Melbourn* was so opposite to the distant simplicity of *Betsy Bentley*, that he thought her ignorant of all the rules of politeness, and deficient in every essential recommendation. He was amazed at his want of taste in first preferring her, but conceived it was owing to the strange seclusion of his former life; and, perhaps, said he, the father, with all his plausibility of profession, instructed his daughter to secure my fortune to his family; but I rejoice that an accidental conversation with the finished world has cured me of the barbarous rusticity of my notions, and qualified me to regulate my future life by more liberal opinions than such as old *Bentley* taught me. If I find there is no possibility of avoiding a return to the country, I will take every opportunity to prejudice my father against *Bentley* and his daughter, will prepossess him to the utmost in favour of Miss *Melbourn*, and if nothing moves him to consent to an alliance with this charming young creature, I will break through all allegiance, cancel every obligation, dissolve all ties with so unnatural a parent, immediately come to town, and marry Miss *Melbourn*; and when my father's dust is added to his ancestors, the law shall do me justice. I find it is in vain for me ever to think of being happy without her; and the more I think for myself, the greater reason I have for suspecting, that I have been educated in woods and darkness, to prevent every opportunity of vindicating my sense and spirit,

by

by nobly dissenting from the poor confined prejudices of Mr. *Bentley* and my father. The former has educated me to serve his own purposes, and my own judgment of the world suggests to me Miss *Bentley's* letter was an artful contrivance to induce me to return, before my affections were engaged to some more accomplished beauty. But, however, I will instruct them, that their designs upon my person and my fortune shall be in every respect frustrated, and that I will act in future like a man capable of reasoning for himself, without suffering any blind bias from the narrow dictates of others. When I return, I will upbraid Mr. *Bentley* with the false maxims of my education; I will charge him home with the artifice and duplicity of his design; and let him see, that the world has given me too enlarged an idea of the human heart, for me to be a moment in doubt respecting the dishonesty of his intention. But the father shall be my friend no more. The daughter shall deceive me no more. I will leave them to the savage barbarity of their insipid maxims, and associate in future with polished characters, capable of giving a true relish for life, and inspiring liberal notions of pleasure.

C H A P. XXVI.

IN this manner he constantly reasoned, or rather betrayed his want of understanding; and he grew so convinced at last, that Mr. *Bentley's* behaviour towards him had been artful and dishonest, that he scarce thought of Miss *Betsy* with any concern at all. Miss *Melbourn* continually improved upon him, he resigned his heart entirely to her capricious will, and thought there was no pleasure upon earth, equal to the enjoyment of her company. The lady on the other hand exulted to observe the fascination of *Fairfield*, and determined to take some early opportunity to give a public proof of the power of her charms, by trifling with the young gentleman's passion, and trying his patience to the utmost of her power.

The time of their stay in town was on the point of expiring, and places were to be prepared for their journey in the following week, in spite of all the pleas, the excuses, the artifices of the young libertines, when an accident retarded their return for some time, which we relate as follows :

Mr.

Mr. *Fairfield* continued in the possession of the same strong prejudices, we have already mentioned, in favour of Miss *Melbourn*, and his mouth was filled in all companies, with the most extravagant praises of that young lady. She was beautiful, she was sensible, she was witty, and mistress of every possible advantage that could distinguish the most excellent of women. He was never absent from any party of pleasure where she was engaged, nor could any inducement keep him from her company an hour. He discovered daily new excellencies of behaviour; admired her for a thousand elegancies, that he never observed in any of her sex before; but, above all, the partiality she paid his suite in preference to that of many accomplished competitors for her smiles. "She treats me, he would say, with the most partial distinction, and is worthy of every homage in my power to pay her. I am permitted to declare my passion with ardent frankness, and have the pleasure to be confident of the sincerity of my reception in return. We were evidently born for each other, and all my future life shall be continually employed to merit the blessing of her hand." Thus extravagantly his infatuation led him to discourse; but the sequel shall prove how far this boasting judge of human nature was right in his conceptions. As he constantly attended her to every public amusement, he one day politely requested the liberty to dance with her at a ball, given on some public occasion. The coach was punctual, and he had the pleasure to lead her to

her feat, in the presence of many of his rivals. The company were in general very genteel, but some more particularly elegant. Among the latter an *Irish* gentleman attracted the general attention of the ladies, whose dress was uncommonly superb, and whose maner was assumingly engaging; his person perfectly genteel, and his mein regular and pleasing.

An object with such attractions excited a general emulation among the ladies, but as the generality were already engaged to particular partners, Miss *Melbourn* determined, if possible, to gratify her vanity at the expence of her promise, and resolved to refuse dancing with *Fairfield*, whatever should be the consequence. Indeed she began to think he had reigned long enough, and was thinking to depose him in favour of some other suitor very shortly. Accordingly, when he solicited the fulfilment of her promise to dance a minuet, the lady affected a sudden indisposition, and declared she did not propose dancing at all that evening. *Fairfield*, disappointed, reassumed his seat, and resolved, as his dear Miss *Melbourn* could not dance, to remain a passive spectator of the company. Miss *Melbourn* was for some time mortified at the insensibility of the stranger, but entertained some hopes, as he had not engaged himself to all appearance, a little stratagem might effectually answer her purpose. Accordingly, when she perceived him pretty near her, she took her smelling bottle, in seeming distress, and after applying it to her nose without any effect, closed her

her eyes, and sunk down towards the lady, who sat next her. This roused the gallantry of the stranger, he flew instantly to her assistance, caught her in his arms, and restored her to life in a few moments. The scene had not escaped *Fairfield*, but he came too late to be of service, and had only the mortification of hearing this gallant request the favour of Miss *Melbourn's* hand, and to hear that *faithful, incomparable* young lady consent, with joy sparkling in her eyes, to oblige him as soon as her spirits were recovered. *Fairfield* endeavoured to expostulate with her, but she burst into a loud laugh, and protested she could not conceive his meaning; was very sorry any gentleman should be disappointed, who had promised himself the pleasure of dancing with her, but did not doubt there were many ladies disengaged, and he would do well to oblige some solitary girl, and look for a partner among them.

C H A P. XXVII.

FAIRFIELD's rage cannot be described at that instant; he flew from her in a violent passion, and was irresolute what conduct to pursue. He solicited *Bentley's* advice; but his friend enjoyed a hearty laugh at his expence, and told him it was not worth minding. This was no counsel; and his spirits were ungovernable. He retired from the company in disgust, and resolved to challenge the distinguished man as soon as the ball should be over. He accordingly ordered the waiter of a tavern hard by, to give him notice when such a gentleman came out, and determined to risque his life, to gratify the present tumult of his soul. He called for wine like a madman, and intoxicated himself with bumpers. He drank confusion to the sex, and Miss *Melbourn* in particular; and gratified his rage by every extravagance in his power. He kicked the glasses from one end of the room to the other, and stamped, and raved like a fury. Then he would fill another bumper, and fling the contents in the fire; again he rung the bell as vehemently as he was able, and threw a full bottle of burgundy at the waiter's head; and cursing him with foaming fury, ordered him to bring another: calling incessantly, and running

ning up and down stairs every minute to enquire if his rival was coming. Liquor increased his phrenzy, and by the time the company broke up, his ravings had collected a mob about the door. At length the waiter informed him the gentleman was coming out, and he flew down stairs in an instant, reaching the place at the moment his rival was handing Miss *Melbourn* to her carriage. Then accosting him in the wildest of wild terms, insisted on the satisfaction of a gentleman; and clapping his hand on his sword, desired him to follow him to the tavern directly. The other very cheerfully complied, and walked with him with great philosophy to his room. *Bentley* wished to prevent blood-shed, but the other would not hear a single syllable, insisting on immediate satisfaction. He fixed himself in a posture for carte and tierce, and called upon his antagonist repeatedly to draw. The Irish gentleman, however, appeared to be in no hurry, and very deliberately accosted him as follows: "In good faith now, my dear lad, this is a very comical business, that you can't be a little peaceable in your uproars, without bellowing like a bumpkin; to be sure now, my love, you are as pretty a thundering blade, as ever I beheld with my eye-sight; but as you are as mad as a March hare, I will treat you with a little cool reason. And now, in the first place, young gentleman, be so good as to tell me, what good it can do a man to have six inches of your cold iron there, in his guts, who can do so much better without it? And in the second place, d'ye see, what signifies your putting yourself in a passion without being good hu-

moured, and talking like a rational creature? And thirdly, now, my dear boy, what is become of your understanding, that you can't remember your old servant Dennis O'Hara? By my faith, if you had only told me of all this a few hours ago, when I dressed your hair this afternoon, I would have singed your whiskers to some purpose."

Bentley and *Fairfield* were amazed at the discovery of Mr. O'Hara, their hair-dresser, in the character of a fine gentleman; but the metamorphose indeed was so well managed, that they could never have discovered the deception, but from his own confession. *Bentley* was immoderately merry at the mistake of his friend, and *Fairfield's* rage subsided a little, on reflecting what a power he possessed to mortify his mistress at discretion. They questioned Mr. O'Hara respecting his masquerade appearance, and that gentleman very politely informed them, that seeing he was as tight made a little lad as ever was dipped in the *Shannon*, a customer of his master's, who had been ill-treated by Miss *Melbourn*, had been at the expence of hiring his dress for that evening; and had engaged him to single out that lady from all the company, to make her the object of ridicule in all polite circles for the future. This account satisfied *Fairfield* in part, but was very far from quieting the storm within him. He dismissed however, Mr. O'Hara on peaceable terms, and sat down to his bottle, determined to drink oblivion to that disorder, that had possession of his soul.

Bentley

Bentley willingly accompanied him, and as both were studious to make the debauch as violent as possible, they called for the strongest wines, and drank out of the largest tumblers the house could furnish. They sung and swore alternately, and committed every excess they could think of; but still *Miss Melbourn's* indifference pressed upon *Fairfield's* memory, in spite of repeated bottles; he continued drinking till the watchman went his last round, and then nature being quite exhausted, he fell speechless from his chair. A sedan was provided to carry him to *Mr. Selwin's*, and *Bentley* in little better condition, after discharging the reckoning, reeled home along with him.

L 5 C H A P.

C H A P. XXVIII.

MR. *Selwin* and his family had set up the whole night, full of the most alarming apprehensions for their safety; they had kept late hours, but never transgressed an whole night before. Servants were dispatched several ways in quest of them, without the least information being obtained, and the confusion began to grow general when *Bentley* knocked at the door; he could scarce stammer to be understood, but *Fairfield* was totally senseless. He was immediately put to bed, and a physician was consulted, who pronounced him to be in a high fever. Respecting *Bentley*, he refused every assistance, and as soon as his speech became articulate, behaved in the most outrageous manner, insulted Mr. *Selwin* and his servants, and threatened, if any body presumed to expostulate with him respecting his conduct, he would quit the house directly. Mr. *Selwin*, however, determined to give him a severe lecture, when he should be more capable of receiving it, and in the afternoon called him into his study, and pleaded with him in this manner :

“ You have heard, Mr. *Bentley*, of the friendship I have so long entertained for your father,
and

and I should have been happy to have found reason for wishing to cultivate the same firm tie with his son ; for friendship, sir, admits of every honest freedom, and I should in that case have expostulated with my young friend in this manner. I respect your natural good sense, sir, too much, not to lament that you respect it so little, and am sorry that a sense of duty to your father, and a regard to yourself, compels me to use strong language, in remonstrating against the general conduct of your life, and the melancholy apostacy of your manners, which a few months conversation with the great world has occasioned. I have observed, young sir, your father's fears fulfilled with very great concern, and as we must part so shortly, for perhaps an eternal season, I will give a word of faithful advice, that your better reason will bear with. Your progress in the ways of vice has been indeed sudden. In six short months you have renounced your principles, renounced every precept and example of your upright father, and adopted every false maxim, every irregular opinion in their room. A conversation with free-thinkers has led you to entertain a contemptible proud sense of your understanding, and has taught you to dissent from every rational creed, by which the moral world is supported, and the christian world secured. Hence has originated your contempt for human institutions, and your neglect of such as are divine. You boast of some superior light, you boast of your independence, and flatter yourself into a persuasion of some extraordinary talents, that justify your departure from the maxims that influence the world at large. You
 object

object to the certainty of a future state, and betray a sad interest in that indisputable truth by your objection ; for a man seldom embraces the doctrines of infidelity in the extreme, till he finds it *convenient* to hope for an external extinction. Sad state ! sad hope ! sad asylum ! from a convicting conscience ; from a reflection that occasionally presses home upon the heart, and needs every contempt of reason and revelation to support it. But, sir, I know, when your libertine companions are absent, and your own thoughts plead within you, many doubts occur respecting the safety of your opinion, and you are tempted, like *Pilate*, to question what is truth ; yet, like him too, you determine to retire. You are armed with sophistry to vindicate your tenets, but if your premises are false, no respect can be due to your conclusions : and though I may very safely, on the most infallible authorities, maintain and prove you to be wrong, I cannot condescend to enter into a logical argument that must be rather plausible than convincing.

You are, sir, (I speak plain, 'tis honest) you are, sir, this day, without religion, without hope without confidence, without moral virtue, and without peace of mind. Your tongue wisdom is temporary, poor, and specious, and all your philosophy dissatisfying and vain. You fly to company, you court the table, but, in spite of all these assistances to bear with time, you want a foundation even for a moment's felicity, and look round upon the world, and every object in creation, as a magnificent display without a meanin ;

meaning ; and treat time as a blank, and eternity as a fiction. I know, young gentleman, your counsellors instruct you to disdain reproof, and to be inflexible in the support of your opinion. They tell you, sir, to admit of nothing but what will satisfy your reason, when your reason can account for nothing. The light, the heat, the life of animals, and vegetables, nay, the minutest wonder in the visible world, is an unfathomable mystery to your reason. Anatomy may make physical deductions upon the human body, and philosophy investigate the stars, but what are these but speculative discoveries ? yet, what can your boasted reason do more ? But, sir, I will hope, you are not totally deserted of shame, and will blush to be told, you have listened to associates who degrade their reason beyond most men. The drunken debauchee, who sacrifices his senses to the glass, and disturbs the peace of society, who violates the good order of families ; talks of the dignity of his reason ! The cowardly casuist, who is ashamed to maintain truth, and fearfully assents to every wild notion his companions impose upon him ; talks of the dignity of his reason ! The weak man, who leaps the pale of every moral obligation ; who indulges himself in every licentious opinion and practice ; who ridicules the wisdom of providence in the conduct of the world ; who injures his fellow creatures, and neglects himself ; this man talks of the dignity of his reason ! Alas, sir, time, if your impetuosity does not provoke an immature fate from some rash hand, time will remove this mask, and the flattering fancy of youth will vanish. You will

will one future day, perhaps, think Mr. *Selwin* not superfluously officious in his advice, when he warned you to correct your errors. I have witnessed to your apostacy with horror, but yet conceive you have understanding that may reclaim you, if you consult it with humility and discretion. You may yet save yourself from future remorse; you may yet save the tender feelings of a sister, the tears of an afflicted father, and the morals of a credulous young friend. But, sir, unless you carry back to the country very different sentiments from those you have possessed in town, the sun will never smile upon your peace again. Your father's day will be shortened by the degeneracy of his son; while you live neglected and despised by the rational and moral world, and pass unheeded to your grave. A fool may sometimes speak as an oracle, and I am satisfied a future day will witness to the propriety of my advice, though your passions should resist it now. Your father, sir, gave me a strict charge to watch your conduct, and give him every minute intelligence, if I saw you inclined to deviation; but I have been sparing of the old man's peace, and for that reason, have not been so faithful in my correspondence, as perhaps I ought; but I must expect from you a sincere resolution to alter your future life entirely, or I must advise my old friend to observe a different conduct towards you. Let me intreat you then, sir, to excuse me from a task so very disagreeable, and let me hope you will entitle me to soften my objection to your behaviour, while you have remained in town."

Bentley

Bentley endeavoured twice or thrice to interrupt *Mr. Selwin's* discourse, but when he came to this period of it, he burst into a violent paroxysm of rage, and told that gentleman, it was highly impertinent in him to dictate to his judgment; that he considered himself responsible to no one for his actions, of which he would immediately convince him, by leaving his house that instant; and respecting his return to the country, he should entirely consult his own pleasure and convenience.

C H A P. XXIX.

BENTLEY took an abrupt leave of *Mr. Selwin*, and as he resolved never to set his foot within his doors again, provided a genteel apartment at the court end of the town, and pursued his pleasure more greedily than ever. The addresses to his mistress employed most of his time, and the rest he divided between dress, the card-table,

table, and the bottle. The young lady every hour gained upon his heart, and as he found it was impossible to live happy without her, he determined to seduce her at all events, and afterwards engage her for his mistress. He had laid frequent snares for her virtue, which the prudence of the party always disconcerted; and at last he conceived the following project, and resolved to execute it as soon as possible.

'Among the many daughters of easy virtue, with whom *Bentley* was acquainted, he had contracted a very familiar intimacy with the kept-mistress of a gentleman, who was absent on a contested election at a distant part of the kingdom. He communicated to this lady his design upon his mistress; and as the vicious ever exult in reducing virtuous characters to their own level, she readily consented to become the instrument of his purpose, and to forward any measure he should concert, for the ruin of the young lady. Accordingly at an early opportunity she was introduced to his mistress in the character of his cousin; and as her behaviour was affectedly modest, and reserved, and her whole deportment rather engaging, the young lady made no scruple of admitting her acquaintance; and indeed, in a little time, conceived a particular friendship in her favour. She made her the confidante of her passion for *Bentley*, declared he had the entire possession of her heart, but that she could not listen to any proposals of marriage, till her papa's return from the north, which she expected in a few days. She spoke highly in favour of *Bentley's* morals,

morals, his address, his ease, his politeness, and much more, which was constantly repeated to the young gentleman. He was, however, a little startled at her father's being expected in town so soon, and as he found his arrival would infallibly disappoint his wishes, he resolved to delay the execution of his plot no longer.

The gentleman's house, where this kept-mistress resided, was situated a few miles out of town, at a considerable distance from any other habitation. A long avenue of elms led to it from the high road; and as there was only one female attendant left there, it was concerted between them, that a party should be made to the opera the next night, and that the coachman should be instructed to carry them to this place instead of returning to the lady's lodgings.

His mistress was accordingly invited, and little suspecting the treachery of *Bentley*, and her female friend, readily consented to attend them. The hackney-coach took them up at her own door, and away they drove together.

C H A P. XXX.

WHEN the opera was over, the coach took them up as before; and as the night was dark and cold, and the blinds were drawn up, the lady had no suspicion, for a considerable time, but that she was in her way home. At length, however, she observed the rumbling of the wheels to cease, and asked the meaning of the vehicle's proceeding so gently. *Bentley* assured her, it was only the advantage of the new pavement over the old, and that they would soon reach her lodgings. The young lady was not entirely satisfied, but still her confidence in her lover silenced her fears, and she expressed no uneasiness till the carriage stopped at the place of their destination. *Bentley* alighted first, and when the old servant brought a light to the door, she discovered it to be a strange place, and began to be much alarmed. She hesitated and trembled very much, objected to getting out of the carriage, insisted on being informed, with what view she was taken out of town at that unseasonable hour, and by whose order the coach was brought there. *Bentley* directly attacked the coachman very severely for his mistake, and the man on the other hand defended himself by saying, he had frequently

quently drove the other lady to that house, and understood he was to do so now. The lady acknowledged, she believed the fellow had been frequently employed by her in coming from the play late in the evening, and on other occasions; assured her it was her own house, and as it was late, advised her by all means to accept of some refreshment; and that as she had been the innocent cause of the mistake, she would cheerfully accompany her back to town. Thus she was prevailed on to alight; and as a cold collation had been prepared, she consented to eat the wing of a chicken, drank one glass of wine, and then requested to return to town. *Bentley* was uncommonly assiduous in his court to her, in the concerted absence of the other, and presumed to take many freedoms, that alarmed the young lady not a little: he pressed her repeatedly to replenish her glass without success, and took care to drink himself into a consummate confidence; and determined very soon to throw off the mask, and appear in his own dark colours before her. He repeatedly clasped her in his arms, and dwelt upon her lips with rapture; then he attempted to remove her handkerchief, and took a freedom with her bosom that roused her resentment to the utmost. She broke indignantly from his embraces, and insisted on the coach being called immediately. "I see, sir," she said, "that I have been cruelly mistaken in your character, and insist upon your leaving me for ever. Base man! how has my conduct encouraged this treatment? But leave me, sir, leave me to the anguish of a disappointed heart, and expect from this night never to see me more. I will

will return with my father very shortly for the country, and forget all the traces of a man capable of such base hypocrisy." Then ringing the bell, she desired the servant to light her to the carriage, and abruptly left the room. She flew down stairs to the front door to call the man, but what was her surprize, to meet nothing but absolute silence, a universal gloom and no carriage near! She called repeatedly with an extravagant wildness of voice, but there was no answer returned. Her apprehension grew very strong, and a kind of convulsive horror shook her frame; she began to suspect some treacherous design, and doubted whether to return to the house, or explore her way, through midnight darkness, at the mercy of cold damps, and pitiless assassins. She found, however, every thing that a distracted imagination could invent from *Bentley*, and determined to run every risk to avoid any further insults. She therefore, by the assistance of a candle at the window, walked up to the gate of the court-yard, and began to exult she should so soon be freed from his power, when she found it fast locked, the key taken away, and no hopes left of escaping. A violent flood of tears relieved her throbbing heart for the moment: she lifted up her streaming eyes to petition the Father of mercy to assist her; for now ruin started her full in the face, and she no longer doubted *Bentley's* merciless intention.

C H A P. XXXI.

WILD and distracted with a complication of anxiety, she ran back into the house in an agony of sorrow, disordered in her dress, and faltering in her voice, and meeting *Bentley*, in the hall, dropt down on both knees before him. "O! sir! Mr. *Bentley*! the meaning, the meaning of all this, I beseech you! There is no coach to carry me to the town, the doors are fast barred against me, and I fear some treacherous design. O! sir! if ever you loved me, hear me, and have mercy upon me. A poor defenceless girl, kneeling at your feet, implores your pity, as you would deserve pity yourself, at the hand of heaven, in the hour of affliction. Let me conjure you, sir, as you value the peace of a father, spare my poor father, spare me. Let me now quit this hated house for ever, and for ever, and I will forgive you every thing that is past, and bless you for the charitable deed." Here her sobs interrupted her voice, and she wept with the most violent affliction.

Bentley heard all this without any emotion, he understood from the conversation of the loose part of her sex, that a woman once subdued was always

ways subdued, and determined at all events to compleat that night his triumph over her virtue. He knew it was in vain to expostulate with her, on the unnecessary violence of her grief, and as he could not retract the liberties he had already taken, he despised every emotion of remorse, and respected no monitor but his passions. He caught her suddenly in his arms, as she was sinking to the floor, and carried her up stairs to the room she had quitted, and seating her motionless in a chair, instantly fastened the door. It was some time before his salts recovered her from her swoon, and then her distraction became more violent than ever. *Bentley* began at last to grow a little concerned for her distress, and endeavoured to palliate his intention by all the sophistry in his power. He argued that matrimony was nothing more than a political human institution; that the human nature was created to enjoy the same freedom of affection, as the rest of the animal creation; that the ceremony of the ring, was a mere superstitious form; and that the mutual consent of parties, was to the full as binding as all the priestcraft in the world could make it. That he proposed eternal fidelity to her, and that at his father's death, which he hoped would not be long before it happened, he would make an ample provision for her during life, and never desert her for a single moment. "So you see, madam, how far my generosity is to be trusted: I will do this, and every thing else in my power to make you happy; but if you continue thus ridiculously inflexible to every persuasion, depend upon it you are

are now in my power, and neither heaven nor earth shall snatch you out of my hands." Here he began to take fresh freedoms, and the lady grew desperate with despair. "Hear me, sweet heaven, if ever innocence and virtue deserved your care, in this hour of horror visit me with deliverance, or grant that I may never see the light of the sun, or the face of any of thy creatures. Let death hide me for ever from my shame. Let death hide me for ever from my father, and my friends, and it will indeed be the greatest of consolations." Then stepping up to *Bentley* with a determined look; "Sir, sir, be cautious how you proceed to further outrage; for, trust me, I will never survive it, and your body and your soul shall answer for the deed. Tho' I have no friend to assist me here, the sure foot of Justice will overtake you in this world, and eternal condemnation hereafter."

Bentley affected a careless indifference. "Upon my word, madam, you would rant in a tragedy speech with very great success; your voice is exactly calculated for stage diction, though your action is rather too violent; but I see it is impossible, my pretty dear, to bring you to any right reasoning, and therefore you must excuse me, if I summons the servant to attend you to your chamber. She will undress you, and I will wait upon you myself in a few minutes. Every precaution is taken to prevent your alarming the neighbourhood, for, to be frank with you, there is no house within a mile. You may rave there-
fore

fore as much as you please, and invoke heaven, as you call it, to work a miracle for your deliverance, but you shall soon see what will all avail."

C H A P. XXXII.

THE old woman attended with the mistress of the house, and, in spite of cries, tears, and intreaties, they carried her forcibly to her chamber. Her ravings at this instant were ungovernable, and *Bentley* was about to assist the women to undress her, when a violent rapping at the front door alarmed them all. They desisted instantly, and demanded from the window the cause of that knocking below. The lady continued shrieking louder than before, and a determined voice demanded admittance, on pain of breaking down the door. *Bentley*, enraged at the interruption, ran down stairs instantly with his sword drawn, and opening the door, demanded in a rage the reason of that intrusion at such an hour. The stranger seeing the sword glimmering at his breast, drew his in an instant, and parrying the first thrust

thrust from *Bentley*, disarmed him in an instant, and ran him through the sword-arm; then breaking from him in an instant, flew up stairs, being led by the light to the room, whence the screams proceeded; he burst open the door in an instant, and discovered the distressed lady to be his dear daughter, his love, *Isabella Barton*. The surprise of meeting her father in such a place, and in so critical a situation, was too much for her spirits, and she fainted insensibly in his arms. My child! my child! my dear *Bella*! was all Mr. *Barton* could utter, and his tears passed plentifully down his daughter's bosom. Then recovering him a little, if I have come, my dear child, too late to your assistance, would I had never been born; for I shall weep too much to suffer life long; and die too soon, to shelter you from misery, infamy, want and destruction, and from temporal and eternal ruin. Miss *Barton's* swoon still continued, and the women went in search of *Bentley*. They found him in the hall bloody with his wound, and heaping bitter execrations on the head of the old officer. He cursed the women furiously for suffering the stranger, whoever he was, to rush into the room, and seizing a poker in his left hand, ran furiously up stairs. Mr. *Barton*, expecting some further violence, gently laid his swooning daughter on the bed, and planted himself before the door to receive the first person who should enter. *Bentley* flew like a lion at his antagonist, and was raising the poker to make a furious blow at the head of the old man, when he discovered the features of Mr. *Barton*. He started back many paces, his

knees smote together, a wild horror possessed his eyes, and he was agitated all over. He attempted to speak, but was unable; and continued with eye-balls seemingly riveted in his head staring at the old gentleman. The alteration of dress made it difficult for Mr. *Barton* to discover young *Bentley* in a hurry; but no sooner did he recollect his face, than his surprize was unutterable. He wiped his tears from his eyes; they dimmed his sight, and he could not believe his senses. "Is it possible, said he, it cannot be, sure, that I have seen that face before, and that though his nature is so much perverted, this young man's name is *Bentley*! if I judge right, sir, and the old man's memory deceives him not. The ways of Providence are indeed dark and intricate, for my life was saved in an heavy hour, by him, who has brought this additional weight of woe upon me. Is it possible that he who so tenderly raised my drooping head, and officiated to my miseries so lately, can have so suddenly forgotten all things becoming a man, and wounded me in the tenderest concern of my affections! Your father sir, was a humane man; he never taught you, I am sure he never taught you to aggravate the afflictions of age, or insult the miseries of the unfortunate. You know by what sad accident I lost my son, and you have no humane emotion in your bosom, thus barbarously to take from me my last support, and sink my daughter to perdition. See there, sir, pale as the face of death, lies the accomplished *Isabella Barton*. When I dwelt upon her goodness, in the late tale I told you, how you wept, and commiserated her supposed apostacy; but, sir, my daughter
never

never fell till now, and I shall talk of this wonderful sorrow in my bosom, till my tongue is for ever stopt, and the worm begins his office. As for you, sir, believe me, low as I am sunk, and wretched as is my portion, I forgive you from my inmost heart, and lament that my sword has pierced an arm, which was once employed to do me service; but perhaps it had been better for me to have breathed my last by the way-side, than to have lived to have seen this hour."

Bentley's situation cannot be described; his heart rose to his throat, yet his cheek was dry; he would have given any thing for the relief of a tear, but had been too long disused to tenderness to expect it. He felt it must be in vain to apologize, and yet the situation of the father and the daughter wrought the strangest conflict in his mind he had ever experienced. He was ready to fly to assist in her recovery, yet his shame, his confusion restrained him. He was inclined to plead with the old officer, but had no argument, no language. His heart smote him, and the scene was too expressive to be sustained; he looked earnestly on the old man, as he leaned over his daughter, and endeavoured to restore her to his wishes; thrice he essayed to bend his callous knees, and with the deepest contrition implore forgiveness; but a consciousness of aggravated guilt assailed him from every quarter, and he quitted the scene, undetermined what course to follow. He ran directly out of the house, and binding an handkerchief round his arm, which

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bled

bled much, he took the direct road for *London*, with very different sensations from those he felt a few hours before.

C H A P. XXXIII.

TO account for this interposition of Mr. *Barton* and the ignorance *Bentley* laboured under respecting the lady's name; we shall observe, in the first place, that after Mr. *Barton's* return to the north, and the recovery of his daughter, he was again called to town, and took his daughter with him; but being obliged soon to return back again to the country, the young lady requested to be left in town with an old lady, who was distantly related to her father, and Mr. *Barton*, ever willing to give his daughter pleasure, readily consented, and was to return, when his business would permit him, to attend his daughter back again. It happened that he arrived within a few minutes after his daughter set out for the opera,

opera, and as the number of the coach was described to him, he immediately went to the *Haymarket*, and waited at the door, enjoying the pleasure of surprizing his daughter; and mixing with the crowd, waited impatiently for her coming. At length his *Isabella* appeared, but was too quickly handed into the coach for him to have an opportunity of speaking to her; the crowd pressing on every side, he could only disengage himself time enough to follow the coach, which drove pretty briskly, and to anticipate the surprize of meeting when it got home. The old gentleman was not a little amazed to find the carriage took a wrong route, and endeavoured to come up with it; but still the coachman drove on, and Mr. *Barton* followed it to *Paddington*. He began to suspect it was possible he was mistaken in the person; but then the features of his *Isabella* were so perfectly impressed on his mind, he could not be wrong, and as the vehicle went faster on the high road, he determined to follow it. Fatigued as he was with his journey, his suspicion of something wrong carried him forwards, and he kept the coach in sight a considerable way, till at length his strength failed him, and the carriage disappeared. He began to grow very uneasy and dissatisfied, and resolved to walk on, till being spent with fatigue, and disabled to walk farther, he made up to the light at the window of the house we have mentioned, and very soon distinguished the screams of his daughter. Thus we account for this discovery, and respecting *Bentley's* ignorance of the lady's name, suf-

fice it to say, that Miss *Barton* soon understood that Mr. *Bentley* was the very person who so chearfully relieved her father; and as Mr. *Barton* had expressed himself so warmly to her in favour of young Mr. *Bentley*, she made the less scruple of receiving his addresses, especially as his behaviour seemed to account for every partiality of her father, and justify every prejudice she entertained for him. She therefore purposely concealed her name from him till her father's arrival, and then promised herself much pleasure from the eclaircissement. The art of *Bentley* supplied every other deficiency, and she doubted not but he was in every respect the character that her father had drawn of him. This it was which led the amiable young lady to entertain an unlimited confidence in his morals, and this it was which subjected her to the dilemma we have last mentioned.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXXIV

WE left *Bentley* on the point of leaving the house, in every tumult of thought, and distress of mind imaginable. The night was very dark and cold, the rain beat, and the wind blew. His heart misgave him at every step, he trembled at the hollow murmur of the wind through the trees, and was uncommonly convulsed all over. This was a scene of horror he had never experienced before; his wound pained him very much, and he was ready to sink to the earth with anguish and terror of soul. Many a time did he attempt to argue away his fears, but his philosophy availed him nothing at that hour. A cold sweat spread over his body, his joints were enfeebled with affright, and his sinews relaxed their power. His fertility of fancy tortured him with a variety of dangers. The midnight ruffian was continually brandishing his bloody knife before his fancy, and he gave more faith to the power of the prince of darkness, than he had ever given before. He turned his head continually at the ideal footsteps behind him, and the post by the road-side obliged him to take a distant circle through the mire: he would have

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prayed,

prayed, but conceived no hope of security in prayers, as he had before shut providence out of the universe. He stood some time irresolute, and debating if he should not end his life by violence; but then the horrors of eternal darkness were too strongly figured by the surrounding gloom, and he pressed forward quicker than before. A transient gleam of past tranquillity occasionally came upon him, and he would then smite hard upon his forehead, and groan from the bottom of his bosom. His treatment of Mr. *Selwin*, made him despair of ever being able to see his father any more; his behaviour to Miss *Barton*, he was convinced, had forfeited that young lady's opinion for ever; his friend, *Fairfield*, was, perhaps, dying with the debauch to which he had trained him; and his debts were so numerous, that he doubted if all his father was worth could discharge them. The horrors of a prison-house glared him in the face, and he thought it possible the wound in his arm might prove mortal, and he might be brought to a death-bed, without hope of futurity, yet dreading to run the risque of it.

These thoughts almost weighed him to the earth, and he wandered about for many hours, till the first tincture of the dawn visited the mountains of the east, and the plowman was whistling over the furrow.

By the time he reached the city, the morning began to advance, and he walked in pain up one street and down another, with the bandage round his arm, till his pain compelled him to seek a surgeon.

The

The blood upon his clothes attracted the notice of passengers; a rumour having prevailed, that a gentleman had been attacked in the New Road the evening before, who had wounded the robber: by the time his wound was dressed, a constable was provided, and as he could not give a satisfactory account of his situation the preceding evening, and disdained sending for Mr. *Selwin* for assistance, he was carried to the Compter, to be examined before the City Magistrate, as soon as his Lordship should be stirring. He once or twice endeavoured to escape from the officers of justice, which confirmed his guilt in their opinion, and if his arm had not pained him very much, he would desperately have set them at defiance. However, he was conducted to prison, amidst a croud of taunting spectators, and locked up with the wretched inhabitants of that place.

When the gloomy features of the jailor presented themselves before him, he was inconceivably shocked; but when the bolts of the lock grated harshly behind him, and the sound of heavy chains at the door, and the clinking of fetters on every side assailed his ears, he looked round with unspeakable terror, clasped his hands together, and wished for a total suspension of thought and sense, and sat down in the most gloomy solemnity of sorrow. Upon examination he was recommitted; a heavy fetter was placed upon one leg, and a surgeon appointed to attend his arm. As he was

seen by one of his creditors in the street, the alarm was soon given to the rest, and detainers to a very large amount were lodged against him.

C H A P. XXXV.

WE will leave *Bentley* awhile in this gloomy situation, and turn our view to *Mr. Selwin's*. Poor *Fairfield's* disorder gained ground every day, he grew delirious with his fever, and an express was sent into the country to *Mr. Fairfield*. Letters were forwarded at the same time to *Mr. Bentley*, with an account of his son's misconduct, and the situation of young *Fairfield*.

Mr. Bentley began to be alarmed with the long silence of his correspondents, and took so afflicting an interest in the grief of his daughter, on account of her lover's neglect, that his health was visibly impaired, his spirits sunk, and there had been no smiles upon his cheeks for many weeks together. *Fairfield's* last letter afforded a transitory comfort to *Miss Betsey*; but as her lover never took the least notice

notice of her afterwards, she soon relapsed into her former unhappy situation; the fire of her bright eyes decayed apace, and all the lustre of her charms was perishing daily. A sad silence succeeded to the extravagant expression of so much sorrow; and a languid pensiveness of spirits, a melancholy solicitude for cold death, and total forgetfulness, took possession of her soul. She answered exactly the poet's description of Patience on a monument; and when the very tender old man, with tears in his eyes, would question her to tell her woe, and admit of consolation, she would look down upon the floor, shake her head, and say, "Sir, you are too good, but my heart is breaking, and I will complain no more." She forgot her passion for books, and all her domestic duties. She wandered much in discourse, when compelled to speak, and when she was followed in her walks thro' the woods, would readily consent to be led back again, and took no notice of any thing that passed about her. Mr. Bentley would sometimes expostulate with his neighbours, who were continually questioning after his *Betty's* health, and ask them, if they did not think it hard, that so sweet a girl as his daughter should be reduced to such a state of affliction; that her tender susceptible disposition should have been so cruelly trifled with, and that too, by the son of his friend, whose morals he once thought were unquestionable, and who had professed so ardent a passion for Miss Bentley. "My poor girl's peace, my friends, is, I fear, for ever departed; and we shall all suffer from the loss of such excellencies, as she hourly displays before us. My old heart

heart must indeed bleed, for the loss of so amiable a child; the poor and the afflicted will miss her; and the rising generation, who were to be educated by her precept and example, will have reason to lament the loss of so sweet a monitor, a mistress, and a friend. Her state, my honest friends, must be truly unhappy, for even the offices of humanity cannot engage her now. Let the old man dwell upon her praise, and let him tell you, in all the duties in life, both in private and public, she was equal and consistent. Before this grief preyed upon her graces, was she not, my friends, as handsome as most of the maidens of the village? and was not her temper every way good and engaging, and her mind comprehensive and clear? Have I not reason to boast of such a blessing, and occasion to tremble, for the possibility of such loss? When I have rose with the lark, to the duties of the field, and sustained the burden of the day, the thoughts of meeting my *Betty* at night, sweetened every fatigue; and I blessed her when she went to rest, and the blessings of the poor were upon her likewise. My dear friends, she is meek as a lamb at the slaughter; she perishes with patience, and without repining; and we shall all weep sore, for, perhaps, the world will never see her equal."

Thus would the old gentleman discourse, at times, and then the thought of his son's resentment of young *Fairfield's* treatment would alarm him.

"Should

"Should it please heaven to take my *Betsy*, he would say, I shall have still reason to adore its goodness, for leaving me so valuable a son. He is, my friends, an honest lad; an honour to my education, and a comfort to my age; but I tremble for the consequences of his spirit. When he hears of this behaviour of his friend, he will at first with great difficulty believe it; but when he is convinced of his treachery, he may be rash in his resentment; but believe me, my friends, I would not have him so. I am sure I never taught him so bad a lesson; but, perhaps his opinion may lead him to adopt the sentiment of that man, who said, *It is written, and we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but it is no where insisted we should forgive our friends.* But we shall soon have my sweet *William* among us again, improved, perhaps, in the politeness and elegance of his manners; but no way embellished in that goodness of heart he carried with him, which few equal, and none exceed. My darling boy is doubtless now upon his journey, and my old arms long to clasp him closely to my bosom, and receive him to my heart; to melt with fondness over him, and part with him no more, till my eyes shall close for ever."

He was talking in this strain, when Mr. *Selwin's* letter reached him. He seized the epistle with eagerness, and breaking open the seal, with a trembling hand, run quickly over the contents, and dropt the letter on the floor. He was silent! He looked round upon his friends, and

was

was still silent! At length he closed his eyes, which swam with sorrow, and sat down, in all the dignity of grief, in his chair. His rustic friends were officious in consoling him, for they soon discovered the cause of his grief, but he wept like a child, and grasped the hands of his old friends by turns, and said, "Sirs, I am indeed visited, a dying daughter, and a profligate son are sore griefs; but I will still worship the wisdom of that good Being, who gives and takes away; and repine at no dispensations he shall prepare for me. It is indeed very, very hard, to have all my hopes blasted, all my views shut in at once; but we must suffer many things here, and I will be very patient, and submit without murmuring any more. I will seek my lost son, and take my poor *Betsy* in my hand, and wish you all happy till my return. I thought to have laid my ashes quietly in this spot, but, perhaps, I may never return again. I shall prepare for my journey as soon as possible, and bid adieu to happiness for a long, long season."

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXVI.

POOR Mr. *Bentley* took a melancholy leave of his neighbours, who followed him with their blessings, the women in particular wept over his daughter, and the whole village was in tears. As they had only a few miles to *Garmarthen*, the old gentleman walked mournfully forwards, with his *Betty* hanging upon his arm; and though he needed comfort himself, was studious in the consolation of his daughter. The young lady had dressed herself fancifully, and seemed to understand something of being about to see *Fairfield* again. She looked more chearfully than she had done, and listened to the sobbing of her father; she silently laid her fingers upon his cheeks, and when she found them wet with his tears, she kissed his hand, looked tenderly upon him, seemed inclined to speak, but forgot herself and looked down as before. Mr. *Bentley* remarked with pleasure the returning sensibility, and was happy to find his daughter partly understood, she was about to see her lover again. She would question sometimes, without attending to the answer, but seemed considerably altered for the better, affected with the prospect of meeting her lover in town, and finding, perhaps, that he was faithful.

When

When her father mentioned his indisposition, as they travelled in the coach, she once said, "Indeed, papa, I pity him, for you know, I used to pity every body till of late; but I have not been quite well, I think, and then I thought some people rather unkind to me, and that was a great pity, was it not, sir?" Thus did the dawns of returning reason gradually break in upon the young lady's mind, and the different objects she met with on the way, contributed to engage her curiosity, and attract her attention. But still she was at times very absent and pensive, and very far from being perfectly restored. When the vehicle arrived in sight of town, Mr. *Fentley* fixed his eyes steadfastly upon the smoky scene, and seemed lost in some studious reverie. At last he broke out, "Scene of vice! scene of care! little did I once think ever to visit you again. You have shipwrecked the morals of my boy, and brought me from my peaceful hermitage to seek the prodigal, and witness once more to the enormities that abound within you. O my sick heart, little did I dream of these sufferings when I parted from my pupils; but I remember a prophetic something overcame me, and this hour verifies my forebodings in the extreme."

When he arrived at Mr. *Selwin's*, he found his friend *Fairfield* just arrived before him in the greatest distress, on account of his son's situation, which the physicians pronounced to be desperate; they mutually condoled with each other in their melancholy calls to town, and passed a dull evening

ing with Mr. *Selwin*, and his family; Mr. *Fairfield* anxiously waiting the effects of his son's distemper, and Mr. *Bentley* longing for the next day, that he might go in search of his boy. Miss *Betsy* was tenderly treated by Mrs. *Selwin*, a very worthy woman; and they were flattered by a physician, who was called in to consult her case, that as he imagined her malady proceeded from a conflict of love, in case the young gentleman recovered, they would find no difficulty to restore her to a sound mind. The young lady had no idea of her lover being in the house, because they studiously concealed from her the danger of his situation; and as she was not capable of being inquisitive, and asked very few questions, it was very easy to deceive her in regard to the desperate case of young *Fairfield*. She had remained three days at Mr. *Selwin*'s, and Mr. *Bentley* had been assiduously employed without any success in search of her brother, when one day being with Mrs. *Selwin* in a chamber adjoining to that of her lover, who was then delirious, she heard him calling with a frantic vehemence for his *Betsy*, his dear *Betsy*, his inimitable *Betsy Bentley*. The young lady was that moment in one of her pensive fits; but starting up in an instant, she distinguished the voice of *Fairfield*, and blushed, and grew pale alternately, and questioned of Mrs. *Selwin* what could that mean. "Madam, is it possible? is it possible? That voice, madam, that voice was once familiar to my ear, and it speaks still in those kind accents it was wont to do." *Fairfield* still kept raving for his dear *Betsy*, and the young lady looked

looked wildly about her for some time, then rushing out of the room, she followed a servant into his chamber without knowing whither she went, and before the attendants could stop her, she stood confessed in all her charms before him. He was sitting upright in his bed, and two attendants had great difficulty to hold him; but when the figure of his lovely mistress played before his sight, he grew almost ungovernable, and cried out: "See there! look! mark that sweet pale face! Blest cherubim, she is all grace! all godliness! Now she smiles upon me, and it is heaven! But do not you think she is one of the pale angels? Yes, very pale indeed! she has no bloom, poor girl, and perhaps some false man has forsaken her."

Thus he raved a considerable time, while Miss *Bentley* looked earnestly upon him, and faintly smiling one moment, looked with the deepest concern the next, and seemed ready to ask an hundred questions, but did not know how to begin, and was in the greatest confusion imaginable, when she was led imperceptibly out of the room.

C H A P. XXXVII.

FAIRFIELD's ravings had exhausted nature to that degree, that after being spent with fatigue, he fell back upon his pillow, and inclined to sleep; a fine gentle perspiration came over him, and the nurse and the apothecary, who soon after came in, promised a favourable turn from so happy an omen. They were not disappointed, as he awaked considerably mended, after a sleep of many hours, and declared he had enjoyed a lovely dream; that he thought Miss *Bentley* stood before him, smiling forgiveness upon him; and his spirits were more calm, his pulse more regular, and his fever much lower than it had been. The next night considerably tended to restore him, and when the physician called the next day, he pronounced him entirely out of danger. Mr. *Bentley* had been, as we before observed, three days employed in searching for his son without the least success, and began to despair of ever seeing him any more. That young man was now reduced to the lowest misery, and must inevitably have perished in the prison, if the following accident had not relieved him: he had been many days confined in the worst part of the prison, on account of his refractory behaviour to the keeper. He had little or no money

ney in his pocket when he was committed, and though he had been acquitted of the supposed robbery, his creditors had secured his person. The common allowance of the place was all the provision he tasted for many days, and he stretched his wretched frame at night upon the bare boards. He had entirely resigned himself to desperation, and cared little what became of him in future. He was confined in a large room, whose little light just made darkness visible, with the refuse of the abandoned world, the very dregs of the infamous and the vile. A thick dew hung upon the cold walls, and toad-stools clustered on the floor. The chearing ray of the sun never entered there, the voice of joy was never heard there. He heard nothing but the bitterest execrations, and felt nothing but the compleatest woe. He neglected his person entirely, his coat being disposed of for garnish; he had no covering from the bleak winds, and pinching cold by night; his beard was grown to an extravagant length; his hollow eyes, and emaciated face, shewed a strong picture of famine; and the alteration was so great, it was almost impossible even for his father to have distinguished him. He was sitting one day upon the floor, leaning his head upon his hand, and attending to some vermin that played about him, when a fellow-prisoner, as usual, called him to the grate, and told him to take his allowance. He called twice, but *Bentley* made no answer: at last, lifting up his eyes, and stretching out his meagre hand to receive the scanty loaf, he discovered his old acquaintance *Tom Caxon*.

Tom

Tom would not have recollected him, if he had not satisfied him respecting his name; but no sooner did the poor fellow discover *Bentley*, than he wept for joy, and pressed him to let him serve him to the utmost of his power. "Let me, sir, inform your friends, or do something to assist you; for though I can laugh, and be as careless as ever in my own confinement, yet, sir, to see you thus, distresses me beyond measure. I will instantly send, if you will give me leave, to the gentleman, where I called by your order for the little reckoning I paid for you, and I am sure he will not suffer this; for *Mr. Selwin* is a man of worth, a gentleman, and a good christian into the bargain. *Bentley* shook his head, and desired to be left to his miseries; but *Tom* immediately sent word to *Mr. Selwin* of the situation of *Bentley*, and that gentleman communicated his intelligence to *Mr. Fairfield*; *Mr. Bentley* being then abroad upon his search. *Mr. Fairfield* had recovered from his apprehensions for his son's health, and rejoiced in the opportunity to oblige his friend, and save him from the shock of such an interview. He took coach to the prison. Notwithstanding the gingling of the jailor's keys, the grating of the door, and the uproar of his fellow-prisoners, *Bentley* never moved his eyes from the ground, as he leaned upon his forehead against the wall, and seemed senseless, motionless, and dumb. *Mr. Fairfield* could scarce sustain the gloomy horror of the place, and desired the jailor to attend him at some little distance. He looked round upon every wretched face in the prison, and the jailor directed him

him to a solitary figure, in the darkeſt corner of the room. He approached *Bentley* trembling, and doubting how to diſcover himſelf to a young man in ſo miſerable a ſituation, whom he had known in his better day, innocent and chearful, beloved and happy. It was too dark to diſtinguiſh faces, but when he called him by his name, he turned his wan viſage from the wall, which rather looked like the features of a dead corſe, than a living creature, and fetching a deep groan, re-aſſumed his ſituation. “Young man, ſaid Mr. *Fairfield*, here is a friend whoſe voice you muſt remember, and who comes with a better purpoſe, than to inſult your adverſity or to neglect it.” *Bentley* continued ſilent. “You had a father, ſir, who never, I am ſure, inſtructed you to doubt his compaſſion for a wretched ſtranger or an enemy, who always allowed much for the errors incident to human nature, and who never dealt harſhly with his ſon.” *Bentley* fetched a deep ſigh, and was ſtill ſilent. “And perhaps, young man, your father has a friend, who will joyfully unite with him in any ſalutary meaſure, to call the wanderer from the error of his way, to bind up the broken hearted penitent, and to ſet the captive free.” *Bentley* groaned very much, and was ſtill ſilent. Here Mr. *Fairfield* raiſed his voice, and taking his hand, deſired him to look in his face, and reſatisfied; that abject as his ſituation then was, he was neither deſerted of providence or of man; but might ſtill live many years, and be an ornament to ſociety, and a bleſſing to his family, if he choſe to conſult his own ſenſe, and be biaſſed by the world no more. *Bentley* trembled, and faltering

faultering in his speech, said, " Sir,—I think, or my eyes,—I think, fir,—but you will bear with me—I am strange, strangely altered—and the smiles of heaven have deserted me long—and my case—my conduct—my behaviour to your son, fir,—gave me no reason to expect this from Mr. *Fairfield*. I have been profligate and impious, but have suffered something for my sins. A cold damp prison-house, fir,—without bread, without mercy,—a wounded limb, and a bleeding conscience, has been the lot of *Bentley* for many days, and, fir, I have no hopes of ever seeing the sun again. But I hope, fir, my dear deluded father knows nothing of all this; and that my sister, sweet girl, knows nothing of all this; for I had rather die, than meet the face of either."

Mr. *Fairfield* tenderly supporting his feeble feet led him to the open air, and was almost overcome with the wretchedness of his appearance. His hair was matted, his beard long and soiled, and his whole dress uniformly miserable. He was conducting him gently to a better room, where he intended treating with his creditors, when old Mr. *Bentley*, who followed soon after, met them.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

MR. *Bentley* fixed his eyes confusedly on Mr. *Fairfield*; he breathed short, he spoke quick, he was agitated to the extremity of nature. He retreated a few steps, and then rushing violently to embrace his son, clasped him fervently to his bosom. "Mr. *Fairfield*, said he, give to my old arms my child, my dear prodigal, my darling *Billy*: yes, give him, give him to my arms." Then bursting into a flood of tears: "Is this, my friend, the wretched residue of my son? Is this all that is left of his beauty and his strength, his wisdom and his morals? But precious be this relief to my soul. I will embalm it with a father's tears, and cherish it again into perfection. Though thou hast erred, my son, capitally erred, seven, nay, seventy times seven, will I forgive you. Tho' thou art sunk thus low, with tenderness and compassion will I raise you; and though thou hast bought experimental wisdom at a severe price, yet, my son, you may profit in future by your fall. My heart and my head have ached for thee, and I have sought thee sorrowing many days; but wretched as I find you, *I have found you*: I will weep over you, and bless you, and pray for you, and be your father as before." This tender
 conflict

conflict lasted a considerable time, and young *Bentley* never knew what it was to be completely oppressed till that moment. His susceptible severe feelings, his multitude of miseries, had awakened every power of his soul to a sense of past error; he was a convicted wretched creature before, but the kindness, the generosity of his father overwhelmed him; he could answer nothing; he was weighed down by a strong sense of his apostacy, and was conscious this goodness of his father was much more than he deserved. He determined, however, to profit by it, and never more to hazard the peace of that heart, which was so liberal in consulting the happiness of his own.

When the creditors were assembled, and the separate demands regularly stated, the largeness of the sum exceeded every expectation of Mr. *Bentley*. He was, however, patient, and willing to submit to all claims; he was full of joy for the recovery of his son, and cared for little beside; but when he found all his little fortune was shipwrecked at once, he lamented that the poor should cry for help, when he should have no power to assist them. "The business of mercy," said he, in which I delighted, is past, and I can distribute bread to the hungry, and cloaths to the naked, no more. I can no longer make the weeping heart sing for joy: I can no longer be a blessing to the little honest community in my village. For these demands upon my son are just, and shall be satisfied, though, I want a roof to cover me; and when my little all is exhausted, I will return to the calm scene I have left behind, take to the

spade and the ploughshare, and eat hard-earned bread with cheerfulness and contentment. My son you will follow me to the field as heretofore, and we will consult the delicacy of your sister, and our mutual labour shall keep the bleak winds from her head, and the storms of adversity shall not approach her. My dear girl will not be prepared for all this; but when her intellects are perfected again, my counsel will live in her memory, and she will remember how oft I have insisted, that in every situation of fortune, *the heart, the heart is all*. In every circumstance of my life, an easy tranquil heart will sustain us through great difficulties: and though we shall be very poor, my son, abject, and forsaken of fortune, the wisdom of heaven is clear wisdom, and we will vindicate it in adversity." "Gentlemen, (addressing himself to the creditors) you shall be satisfied to the last farthing. The little provision I have made for my poor girl, and this her unhappy brother, shall be yours. I will procure immediate unexceptionable bail for his liberty, and answer for every claim you make upon him. Then, gentlemen, I will take my children in my hand, return to my hermitage in *Carmarthen*, and begin the world anew."

Here Mr. *Fairfield* interrupted Mr. *Bentley*. "My dear sir, do you wish your precepts to be void, or do you conceive you have instructed me in vain? I have regulated my life by your lessons, my friend, and the best of them were well directed to secure my heart against avarice, and

narrow

narrow passions. I should be a very wretch, a pauper, and ignorant of every true pleasure, if I neglected a moment's service to my friend. You, sir, are, in every respect, my friend: and I rejoice that an opportunity offers to convince you, I am capable of vindicating a liberal principle. You are superior to mean conceptions; and I (by your counsel) am independent of all contemptible self-consequence; all ideal importance, that is too apt to proceed from a superiority of fortune. As you value me, you shall bear with me, and be silent, whatever measures I pursue. And observe this, you will offend me in ever mentioning your son's debts from this hour. They are my debts, my dear sir, and I do insist on being subject to every farthing: I will not share professions with you only, sir, but my estate also, whenever there shall be occasion. My estate! wretched privilege! indecently considered, I despise it; and was it not for the advantage of serving the unfortunate, I would renounce most of its advantages to-morrow. The necessaries of life are all that we want. The superfluities pain us; and I am often tempted to conclude, that the man who doubts of an evening faggot, to cherish the fainting limbs, has many advantages over the epicure and the glutton; and that doubtful circumstances are often superior, in a degree, to every certainty of possession."

C H A P. XXXIX.

WHEN Mr. *Fairfield* had carried his point, and satisfied young *Bentley's* creditors, he was surprized to see a little pleasant figure, rubbing his hands, and capering about the room for joy. This gentleman was no other than Mr. *Caxon*, who had forgotten his own captivity in the prospect of *Bentley's* freedom. Old Mr. *Bentley* was extremely pleased with the honest transport, and more particularly so, when he found he had before assisted his son in distress, and was the immediate means of his being recovered and restored. He shook *Tom* cordially by the hand, thanked him, furnished him with means to discharge his debts, and promised his friendship in future. Young *Bentley* seconded his father's engagement, and added, if *Tom* chose to return with him into the country, he would provide for him near his person; this the other joyfully accepted, and all parties being reconciled, and every demand settled, a coach drove them to Mr. *Selwin's*: The old gentleman laughed heartily at *Tom's* story, which he concluded as follows. " So, gentlemen, as I told my young master here, at our last meeting, I had got to my old trade of accommodating the seat of sentiment with wigs of all shapes, and dimensions; I boarded in the
house,

house, and went on very well. I talked politics, and scraped upon the fiddle in the evening, and sometimes took a sober six-penny worth among the nether gods, in the upper regions of the play-house; and, now and then, carried on a little gallantry with the neighbours maids, and lived as merry as a linnet. Well, gentlemen, all this would not last for ever. For Madam Fortune soon got into her false purposes again, and dispossessed me of all my sun-shine in a twinkling. To be sure, if I had carried on my gallantries abroad, this mistake might never have happened, but as my master, poor soul, could not carry on his business without a journeyman, my mistress, good woman! wanted an assistant also; and so, sirs, I very humanely undertook, at times, to give her all the assistance in my power. We carried on matters pretty quietly for some time, as my master was frequently out of the way in the evening, when you shall hear what a horrid scrape, by assiduity to please all parties, brought me into. I had been one day out carrying a new *Tete* to an old gentlewoman in the country, who was on the point of being married to an *Irish* fortune-hunter, when returning late in the evening, I went directly to bed, and waited, as usual, for my mistress, who generally retired to her devotions pretty early; it was not long before I heard her door open, and as soon as the light was extinguished, I crept softly to my station: I had no sooner jumped into bed, than the most hideous voice assailed my ear, that I ever remember to have heard in all my life-time. Thieves,

N 3

murder,

murder, fire, rape, robbery and confusion, were bellowed forth in most dreadful strains, and the room was full of neighbours in an instant. As soon as a light came in, I discovered the harsh features of an old damsel of fourscore, without a tooth in her head, and as grey as a badger. I would have fled like another *Joseph*, but she held fast by my shirt, till my master came to my assistance. He immediately happened to guess something, respecting his sweet rib, and therefore, by way of compliment to his wife's chastity, he carried my hide for me near half an hour, and then sent me into the street, almost as naked as the first man in paradise. The watchmen finding me unarmed, ventured to approach me, and as I told them a pitiful story, one of them lent me his great coat, and the next day put me again in possession of my wardrobe; so I soon grew as blithe as ever, and I learned since that the old gentlewoman,, whom I had the honour to disconcert, was my master's mother, who had that day come out of the country, and my mistress had no opportunity to give me notice of her being accommodated with the best room. In short gentlemen, since this period of my memoirs, I have shifted the scene continually, by which I contracted a chandler's shop debt of fifty shillings, and being found guilty of poverty, was sentenced to that place, from which your bounty has relieved me."

The gentlemen were pleased with the novelty of *Tom's* story. Mr. *Bentley* censured those parts of it, he thought amiss, and *Tom* promised to reform.

C H A P T E R *the Last.*

WHEN the coach arrived at Mr. *Selwin's*, a general face of joy diffused itself over the whole family. The interview between Miss *Bentley* and her brother, was affectionate and tender, and her intellects were repairing every hour. Young *Fairfield* was sufficiently recovered to join with the rest, in congratulating his friend on his happy restoration; and as he no longer thought of Miss *Melbourn*, but with sovereign contempt, his *Betsy* engrossed all his thoughts, and an early day was appointed for their nuptials. Young *Bentley* was a sincere penitent; he exerted every power of his mind, towards obtaining a reconciliation with moral wisdom, and determined as soon as possible to return to *Carmarthenshire*, and never see *London* any more. He was still pensive and melancholy for the loss of Miss *Barton*, and solicited Mr. *Bentley*, as he wished his peace, to endeavour to obtain his forgiveness from the father and the daughter, for the outrage he had been guilty of. This was a commission very agreeable to Mr. *Bentley*. He took his son in his hand, and sending for Mr. *Barton* to a coffee-house, near his lodgings, surprized that worthy old man with a sight of his *Carmarthenshire* friend. There was the greatest cordiality on both sides at meeting; and as Mr. *Bentley* answered for the return of his son's morals, the old gentleman promised to become an advocate with his daughter in his favour. "If my *Isabella*, said he, can be convinced of his return to virtue and to reason, I know he has an interest in her affections, that will plead for

for him, and shall be happy, my old friend, to be allied to the family of my dear Mr. *Bentley*. Your son must supply to me the loss I have sustained in my boy, and be a comfort to my sinking years." "Sir! sir! said *Bentley*, I will be a messenger of joyful unexpected tidings, and tell you, sir, your son lives; lives sir, and has proved himself often in my company to be worthy of so good a father. He has befriended me with wise council very often, and I love him, though his precepts were rejected. I will this instant send for him at a coffee-house at no great distance, and you shall witness to the wonder of his cure." This discovery was almost too much for Mr. *Barton*, however, in a few minutes the young gentleman appeared. The tenderness of the interview can better be imagined than described; old Mr. *Bentley* leaped for joy, and Mr. *Barton's* transports were ungovernable; he ran instantly with his son to Miss *Barton*, and found little difficulty, in the height of her felicity, to prevail on her to suffer young *Bentley* to continue his suit, and endeavour to recover her good opinion; especially as the discovery of her brother had been brought about by his means. *Bentley* therefore visited as before, and after making every concession in his power, for past irregularities, and daily studying to convince her, how sincerely he was a proselyte to virtue, the lady consented to give her hand at the altar, and a day was fixt for the celebration of both the nuptials.

Young Mr. *Barton* was much admired and caressed by all parties, and as he was admitted on on the most familiar footing by the old gentleman, conversing

conversing one day on the approaching felicity of his friends, he begged permission to introduce a lady of exquisite merit, to whom he had been long contracted, but that she had come over to *England* to enquire after some relations, and consult their approbation of the alliance. A general desire was expressed to be favoured with a visit from the fair stranger, and the next day was appointed to receive her. Miss *Bentley* and Miss *Barton* were no less charmed with her beauty and sense, than with her affability and politeness: after tea, the old gentlemen being present, she observed that the circumstances of her birth were intricate; that her mother, upon her death bed, had delivered to her a sealed paper, which she desired her to bring over to *England*; and that the gentleman to whom it was directed, would discover to her, that her father was still alive, and would make her amends for the neglect of her mother in the material circumstance of education. She said an attachment to Mr. *Barton*, and a desire to pay a dutiful obedience to her father, had brought her to *England* a few days before; that she had called upon the gentleman that morning, but not finding him at home, had left the packet, and requested the favour of his attendance at Mr. *Selwin's* that afternoon; because Mr. *Barton*, she added, gave her the strongest assurances of the friendship and goodness of the company present; and she had thoughts of soliciting their assistance to discover her father, in case the gentleman's account should be imperfect.

At that instant the stranger arrived; he was well known to Mr. *Selwin*, and Mr. *Fairfield* instantly

stantly discovered him to be a relation of his wife's, and was soon convinced that the young lady was his daughter. He was happy in the recovery of so great a treasure, more especially as he found her uninfluenced by her mother's tenets, in the article of religion; and after the extravagance of his joy subsided, the next day was fixed upon for the marriage of the three couple, and the nuptials were celebrated accordingly. They all set off directly for *Carmarthenshire*, not forgetting Mr. *Caxon*, who officiated as a chief attendant; and they are at this day the ornaments of religion, the blessings of society, the patrons of poverty, the teachers of ignorance, and universal benefactors of the village.

Poor Miss *Sophia Melbourn* remains yet unmarried; she is mortified daily by the contemptuous neglect of former suitors, and the sneers of her acquaintance. She lives a wretched prey to meanness and disappointment, and will be a lasting monument of the cruelty of her parents, in neglecting to inform her mind with wisdom, and to train her heart to true virtue.

The Author takes leave of his readers with this reflection, That however the polite and learned world may value itself upon any superficial embellishments it enjoys, the evil propensities of the heart are seldom corrected by literature, or a conversation with the refinements of polite circles; that we may be very wise and very happy, with a very little school learning; that all the powers of scientific knowledge, rather increase than satisfy enquiries; and that the wisdom of the heart is all.